

P. V. Angl 249^r - 3

Monier

<36630126470012

<36630126470012

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

ABEL ALLNUTT.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“HAJJI BABA,” “ZOHRAB THE HOSTAGE,”
“AYESHA,” &c.

And if I have done well as is fitting the story, it is that which I
desired ; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain
unto.

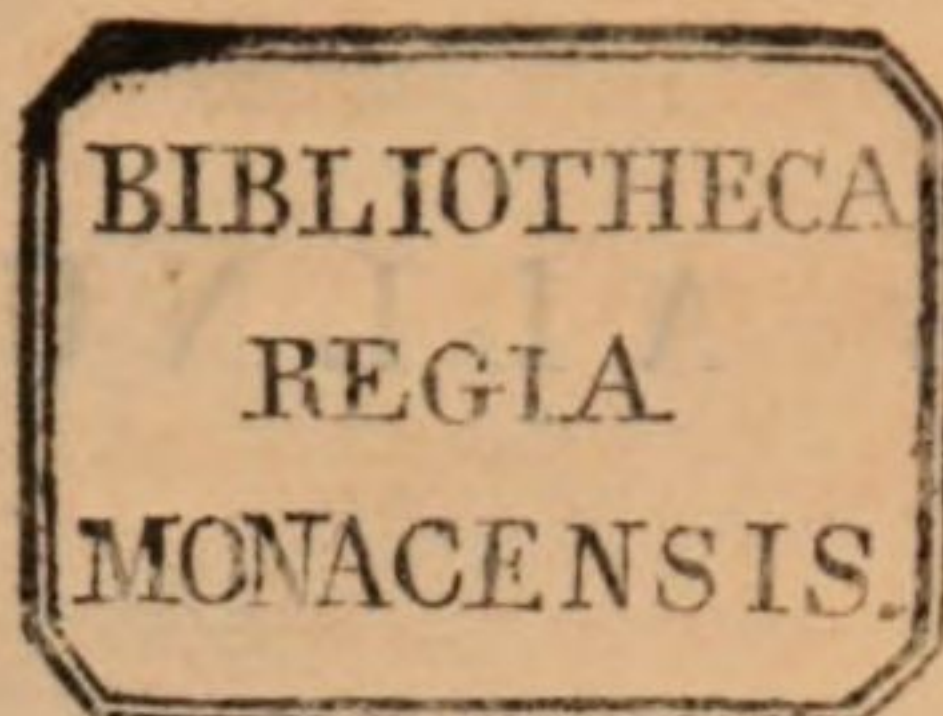
APOCRYPHA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1837.



LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset-street, Fleet-street.

ABEL ALLNUTT.

CHAPTER I.

New characters described, important to the beginning of the end of this history.

WE must now direct the attention of the reader to an entirely distinct series of events, in which a succession of new personages are about to be brought before him. In the development of their actions, we have endeavoured to show how remote causes bear upon the lives and destinies of individuals; thus exhibiting the mysterious ways of Providence in producing results which, in the narrowness of man's perceptions, he may perhaps indistinctly anticipate, but cannot with certainty foresee.

We have before mentioned the name of Old-

bourne as that of the person whom Mark Woodcock was commissioned to seek in some far-distant part of Asia, or wherever he might be. The circumstances which brought on this event we will endeavour to comprise in as small a compass as possible, and only put forth such a portion of them as may be necessary to the full elucidation of this our history.

Sir Roger Oldbourne was a baronet of ancient descent, of great wealth, and the owner of vast hereditary estates, who lived in the family mansion, surrounded by a park and all the concomitants of grandeur, situated in one of the eastern counties of England. He was the transmitter of a long line of faces,—or, as a wag in the neighbourhood once said, “of a line of long faces,”—and was now, owing to weak health brought on by constitutional gout, drawing fast to the close of his earthly pilgrimage.

Although his family was ancient, yet it was not numerous; for it was one of the marking circumstances of its history that the line had been carried on for the most part by only

sons,—the males having always evinced strong antipathies to the marriage state, and usually marrying late in life, more for convenience' sake than for other motives, in order to procure heirs whereby to prevent the extinction of the name and the dispersion of the property. The father of the present baronet was rather an exception to the rule, for he married at the age of forty and had three children—two sons and one daughter. The eldest was Roger; the second was Peregrine; and a daughter, married in early life.

All the Oldbourns had strong literary tastes, which were principally displayed in the investigation of antiquity. Their imaginations would take fire at the sight of an old urn or a rusty helmet, when the beauties of Nature would pass unnoticed. They had all been collectors in the various departments of antiquity; so much so, that the family mansion, Oldbourn Hall, was more like a museum than a living house. Ancient armour, Roman vases, cabinets of coins, bas-reliefs, bronzes, marbles, and every species of remains, were deposited throughout the house

in conspicuous places, and formed the pride and delight of the family.

Sir Roger himself was a collector ; but his tastes soared far beyond Roman remains—he aspired to the possession of Grecian treasures, and had been successful in the acquisition of some of the choicest specimens of art, the produce of the genius of that celebrated people. In his youth he had travelled in Greece, where his taste was formed ; and he there became imbued with the superiority of the Greeks in matters of sculpture and architecture over every other nation of the world. This had become the predominant feeling of his mind, and his zeal for antiquity placed him foremost in the ranks of the virtuosi and antiquarians of his day. He wrote a celebrated essay upon the Siege of Troy, in which he disproved everything which others had proved, and distinguished himself by disturbing the general belief upon several of the best authenticated events in ancient history,—writing dissertations to maintain that his facts were the only true facts, and his opinions the only true

opinions. He became a member of all the learned societies in Europe, and consequently as many initial letters crowded after his name as are contained in the alphabet. With such occupations, and in the excitement of such pursuits, he quite forgot to marry ; and old age already began to creep upon him ere he had provided himself with an heir to his estates. He consoled himself, however, by the reflection that he had a brother who would take that trouble off his hands ; and about the time we are now describing, his whole thoughts were turned to the accomplishment of that object.

He had ever been tenacious of the antiquity of his family ; his pride of ancestry was excessive, and he allowed of no compromise when anything was proposed which might lower the dignity of his name. This was strongly exemplified in the treatment which his sister had met at his hands. She, when a sentimental young girl, against every wish of her family, had married a lieutenant in a marching regiment, of the name of Manby, no otherwise distinguished than as being very handsome,

and poor as lieutenants generally are. She was in consequence entirely discarded by her family; and when her brother came into possession, with his title, he adopted all the family hates, and was inflexible towards his sister and her husband. We need not inform the reader that she was the mother of Edward, who, we hope, has made no unfavourable impression in our narrative, and of whose fate we shall have much to relate hereafter.

When the death of his sister and of her husband was announced to Sir Roger, we will not say that he rejoiced at the circumstance—for he was not in fact a hard-hearted man; but he felt like one relieved from the claims of a just debt;—he said to himself, with a sigh, “Poor thing! it is a mercy that she’s dead!” and honoured her memory by ordering a suit of black clothes.

But when, shortly after, he received a letter to inform him that that sister had left an infant son destitute and in want of every assistance, he became inflated and angry with ancestral pride as he reflected that his nephew’s name

was Manby, and wrote back for answer by return of post that he must decline any interference with what did not belong to him; begging that the child might be taken to the father's relations, for that 'he could not be called upon to come forward;' for such is the formulary on such occasions. The child did return to his father's relations; and his paternal uncle, then a clerk in a brewer's counting-house, and afterwards a brewer himself, brought him up—and we need not again repeat the career which he had run.

Sir Roger, however, was not inwardly displeased to know that he had a real and lawful nephew belonging to the family stock in store, in case he did not marry himself, and in case anything should happen to his brother. This reflection soothed his indolence, cherished his objection to marriage, and gave him more leisure to write essays; and although he never openly made inquiries concerning him, or took any apparent interest in his fate, yet he managed to learn by indirect means that he lived, that he was strong and healthy, and that he

would not be a disgrace to his name. He more than once, particularly when assailed by illness, had been on the point of sending for Edward and adopting him in his family ; but he was as often stopped by that said feeling of pride, which made him feel that in so doing he would be open to associating with tradesmen, and known as the connexion of a brewer.

His brother, Peregrine Oldbourn, many years younger than himself, was a most thorough scion of the old stock in tastes and in disinclination to marriage, although he superadded a catalogue of eccentricities which, as they all had a "leaning to virtue's side," endeared him to everybody who knew him, and particularly to Sir Roger. Peregrine had early caught his brother's taste for antiquity and antiquarian research, and had been fired by the descriptions of his travels. He passed through school and college with high distinctions as a scholar ; and not being satisfied with the bare acquisition of Greek and Latin, with great assiduity, he busied himself in the acquisition of the Oriental languages—laying up a store,

as he said, for the time when he should travel into Eastern countries, where he hoped to make his own collections, and carry forward his own investigations. His whole ambition was to be a learned man and a great traveller: one of his earliest wishes was to become possessor of a certain altar dedicated to Bacchus, in the island of Delos, of which one sees a representation in Tournefort's Travels, and which, as will be narrated hereafter, he attempted to gratify.

At his father's death he became possessed of a small independent fortune, which amply allowed him to prosecute his own tastes; and when he left college, unlike other young men, who often devote themselves to pleasure and frivolity, he buried himself in his books, and led the life of a student. These habits brought with them a train of eccentricities which increased with his years. He seemed by Nature cast in the mould of an old man, as if it were intended that he should begin life by the end instead of the beginning. His person was stiff, the shape of his face antiquated, and his dress in every way suit-

ed to these characteristics : no superfluous hair gamboled over his well-shorn face, no button compressed that which was intended to be unconfin'd, and no Crispin was ever allowed to plan a shoe that would generate an excrescence. His manners were distinguished by old-fashioned courtesy and a tone of great benevolence ; but at the same time he was subject to such fits of absence, that a stranger often set him down as proud and supercilious. It was principally from this infirmity he derived the character of eccentricity with which he was destined to go through life. His early friends accused him of affectation : it is probable that had he been well ridiculed at first, the habit of abstraction which at length became part of his nature might have been destroyed, and that a sane mind would have thus been gained to the world. As it was, from at first becoming forgetful of times and places, he gradually became lost to all the common recollections so necessary in an intercourse with our fellow-creatures. He forgot the names of his acquaintance, often of his intimate friends ;

he as commonly arrived before his time at an appointed place as after it, and most frequently not at all. One of the principal feats in record against him was performed at an evening party, after he had drunk tea; viz. placing his tea-cup within a gentleman's hat who was standing near him, mistaking it for the servant's salver. Many and such like acts secured for him the imputation of eccentricity, which rendered him an object of kind remark to his friends, and of ridicule to his acquaintance.

Having quitted the university, he sought the first opportunity to put into execution his favourite project of Eastern travel; but this was delayed as much by the impediments which his brother threw in his way, as by his own habits of indolence, absence, and procrastination. His brother's object in keeping him at home was to see him married; but to this Peregrine was so much averse—at least before he had worked off his longing to apply his antiquarian lore to practical purposes, that at length it was thought better to restrain him no longer, in order that by giving the reins to

his desire, acquiescence might be produced by satiety.

At length he took his departure, anxious to go over the same ground in Greece which his brother had travelled before him, and bound by a promise that as soon as he should have entirely gratified his curiosity, he would return home and fulfil his brother's wishes by taking unto himself a wife.

We will not enter into a long detail of his travels through Europe, nor of the various adventures produced by his oddities and peculiarities: it will suffice to say, that go where he would, he was sure to sustain to the utmost the character of his countrymen for eccentricity. In France he was called '*cet insulaire bizarre,*' '*cet original,*' '*ce drôle de corps.*' In Italy, those who had dealings with him would first point to their heads, and then shaking their finger, would exclaim, *Quel milordo è un poco così, così.* There his enthusiasm for antiquity broke out in all its vigour, and he became the idol of cicerones and the milch-cow

of the virtuosi. Before he was allowed to leave Rome, he was encumbered with so many genuine articles of the remotest antiquity—so many undoubted busts, such varieties of unique cameos, such specimens of rare intaglios, and so many things of which he was assured to be the only happy and highly enviable possessor, that already he might be said to have made a good collection. His ardour, however, was a little cooled when, after having paid a large sum for the indubitable fragment of an Apollo, which only wanted head, arms, and legs to make it perfect, described to him as having been recently dug up in the Forum, he found that a brother traveller had purchased a similar thing, only perfect, for a very small price, from the artist himself.

From Naples he crossed over to Sicily. At Pæstum he almost ran clean out of his wits with delight and antiquarian rapture; but in Sicily, going from one ruin to another, unchecked by the ardent heat of the sun, undismayed by difficulty and discomfort, he was

obliged to stay his progress for a while, owing to a violent attack of fever.

This circumstance had one beneficial result, for it tended very much to cure him of some of those fancies and vagaries which had begun to unfit him for the common affairs of life : he was obliged to exert the energies of his mind as well as his body for practical purposes, and thus he was driven from that dreaming mood which bade fair to make him a totally useless member of society. As soon as he recovered, he embarked for Malta. There he sojourned some time, and then crossed the Archipelago to Rhodes. He landed in safety in Syria, and reached Aleppo in good health ; and this was the last place from whence his brother had received any tidings of him.

CHAPTER II.

A letter from the East, which, if out of place here, may be appreciated elsewhere.

SIR ROGER had long been in expectation of news from his brother, and began to be very anxious for his safety, because, in his last letter, he intimated that he was about crossing the Great Desert to Bagdad. However, his fears were relieved upon receiving a letter from him in perfect health, and full of ardour in his pursuits. The precise spot whence this was written was omitted, and only after an examination of its contents did it appear that it came from Persepolis. Not once had he named that place throughout the letter; by which he disclosed that peculiar quality of his mind which exhibited acuteness and intelligence upon mat-

ters of speculative interest, while it rendered him forgetful of the common forms and provisions necessary to the daily business of life.

As this letter is likely to throw light upon his character, and as moreover it contains some hints which may be thought worthy the attention of the learned, although it be inclosed within the leaves of a novel, we think that we cannot do better than to insert it at full length. It was as follows :

“From my tent, pitched in the
Great Hall of Columns.

“DEAR ROGER,

“My imagination takes me to the moment when you will open this my letter and become informed of the place from which it is dated. If you have not lost all your former ardour for the sublime study of antiquity—if the interest which you once took in things gone by be not entirely lost in that for the things that are, you will rejoice to hear from a spot so interesting to the historian and the antiquary as the one from which I now write.

I would not begin with so much enthusiasm had I merely to describe what I see before and around me—objects which have already been described, and which are now as well known in their details as any of the celebrated ruins of Italy or Greece; but I write with the more zeal, because I think that I have hit upon a better explanation of the history of these celebrated remains than, as far as I am informed, has been given by any preceding traveller. In two words, before I go further, I will say that the conclusion I have come to is, namely, this: that these ruins, in architecture and general character, afford specimens of the architecture and general character of the Temple of Solomon.

“Do not, now, I beseech you, begin to exclaim, as you are wont to do, ‘This is one of your paradoxes—this is one of your theories founded upon a crotchet and engendered by a conceit;—but hear me out, and you will see that I have more to go upon than you at first may conceive.

“My conclusion is mainly grounded upon

several points of similitude which exist between the actual remains and the description of the temple given in the 1st Book of Kings, 4th chap., and in the 2d Chronicles, 3rd chap., and upon the coincidence which makes the rebuilders of the temple and the ancient possessors of this place to be one and the same personages.

“The first point of similitude which I find is in the general contrivance and character of the building. We read in 1st Kings, 6th chap. of a porch before the temple of the house; of windows of narrow lights against the wall of the house; of chambers round about; of a middle chamber; and of winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. Now here I can distinguish a porch—a porch too forming a principal feature of the whole building; then I find my windows of narrow lights, with my several chambers built round about; and also I am abundant in stairs, which may be called winding, inasmuch as they go from one platform to another. All these different objects are of a peculiar style of compo-

sition, a little tinged with Egyptian taste, but otherwise quite unique: they compose an immense building, which, like the Temple of Solomon, might have been half house, half temple, built of stone; the masses, which are put together with considerable skill, seem to have been 'made ready before they were brought thither,' and when upraised in walls, have a striking and remarkable appearance.

"We also read that 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' which appears to have been identified with the temple, was raised upon forty-five pillars. Now this great hall was supported by forty-eight pillars, exclusive of others in various parts; and it is moreover generally called by the natives *Chehel Minar*,—the Forty Pillars.

"The next point of similitude is, I conceive, to be found in the architecture of the pillars themselves. The description found in the 7th chapter of 1st Kings, 15th and following verses, of the two pillars of brass, and in the 3rd chap. of the 2nd Chronicles, 15th and 16th verses, evidently the same pillars, although their dimensions are given differently, appears very much to illus-

trate the very singular, and I believe I may say, the only pillars of the sort in the world, which are seen here erect in the building which I call the porch. In the sacred text, they appear to have been composed of base, shaft, and capital, as in the established orders; but the capitals were quite different from those known in Greece, inasmuch as there was a great accumulation of ornament. What ‘the nets of checker work,’ and ‘wreaths of chain work,’ and ‘the pomegranates,’ might have been, it would be difficult to say; but certainly the capitals of the pillars now before me, curious and complicated as they are, to my mind afford an explanation which no other capitals that I have ever seen can give me. I think much might be said in bringing out the similitude,—but that I cannot do in the short limits of a letter: it is enough to assert, that these columns, without any stretch of imagination, may be fairly said to have originated in the same school as those described in the Bible.

“The third very singular point of similitude is in the sculpture, and particularly in illustra-

tion of what both in the Kings and in the Chronicles are called the cherubims. In Calmet we find some very full details upon this subject, although nothing conclusive; for on no subject, it appears, has there been so many unavailing conjectures as respecting the nature of these figures. Grotius says the cherubims were figures like a calf; Bochart and Spencer, an ox. Josephus says they were extraordinary creatures, of a figure unknown to mankind. Clemens Alexandrinus believes the Egyptians imitated the cherubims of the Hebrews in their sphynxes and hieroglyphical animals. The descriptions which Scripture gives of the cherubim differ, but all agree in representing a figure composed of various creatures—a man, an ox, an eagle, and a lion. Now, those most extraordinary figures represented upon the portals here combine these four characteristics; and I agree with Calmet, that in these interesting sculptures we may gather a very fair idea of the figure called the cherubim. May one not naturally ask, then, how got they here? If my conclusion be just, that the architect of the Temple of Solomon

and of these immense structures, was the same ; then the answer to be made is at once easy and natural, and the solution of the difficulty self-evident.

“The fourth point of similitude is the circumstance of overlaying the walls with gold. Everywhere the house of the Lord is described as being overlaid with gold : the walls, the cherubims, the carved figures, the palm-trees—all were overlaid with gold. Now, in every part of these ruins are evident traces of either gold or some bright metal having been let in. In almost all the large figures representing a royal personage,—that is, in the tiara or crown, the beard, and the bracelet,—may be seen the remains of small nails—some in which the nails are still found, which fixed the plates of metal on the stone ; and, I think, on examining the surface of the inscriptions, the sculptured palm-trees, and other figures, it is not difficult to remark that they have been overlaid with some composition which in its original form very likely shone like gold, or by its colour was made to represent that metal.

“ These different points of similitude, and the many others which I could adduce, would have produced comparatively but small influence on my mind, were they not backed by the circumstance that the possessors of these regions and the possessors of Jerusalem were one and the same. Cyrus, upon becoming the sovereign of both Media and Persia, began the rebuilding of the temple, according to that renowned edict of his recorded in Ezra i. 2. After a suspension of the building, owing to the counteracting intrigues of the Samaritans, it was again set forward in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and finished in the sixth year of that monarch's reign; he having discovered among the Jewish treasures at Babylon the rolls or books relating to the former structure, most likely containing the architectural plans and details of the building. Now, we ask, can anything be more likely and more consonant to what a modern Persian monarch would do, than, whilst he ordered a continuation of so famous a building for the Jews, that he should build one also for himself, adopting the same

style of architecture, and adapting many parts of the temple and of the house of the forest of Lebanon to his own use? It is agreeable to reason to conclude that the new temple was as like the ancient temple as possible; and every plan both of it and the house of the forest of Lebanon, which was identified with it, was doubtless preserved with as much care as were the gold and silver vessels of the house of God. That the second temple was as splendid as the first, is confirmed by the prophecy of the Prophet Haggai; and therefore we may affirm, that what we now see erect in the spot whence I am now writing afford a fair idea of what might have been the Temple of Solomon and the houses belonging to it, and consequently what sort of place might have been the spot which was glorified by the presence of our blessed Saviour in person.

“Of what may be said to the contrary by the Persian historians or traditionists, that these buildings were erected by their fabulous King Jemsheed, I take no heed. In matters of such remote antiquity I hold the Persian historians

to be of no authority, for they do not possess any well-authenticated records, as far as I know, before the time of Mahomed: whereas, all my conjectures have been taken from that book of all truth the Bible, and, I flatter myself, are corroborated directly and indirectly by the testimony of the Greek historians and geographers.

“ This place has also been called Istakher; and that city was said to have been built by Jemsheed. Now nobody adverts to a rocky eminence in the plain, crowned by ruined walls and towers, which is to this day called Istakher; and which, therefore, might make the Persian historians correct, whilst my suggestions may therefore be true also.

“ Such, my dear Roger, are the principal arguments upon which, without vanity or enthusiasm, I hope to establish the facts for which I have been contending. I think they will be found of no inconsiderable importance as illustrative of both sacred and profane history; and in them, perhaps, the decypherer of the arrow-headed inscriptions may find a help to

his studies. In many of the perfect and detailed sculptures we may be furnished with new lights upon the connexion which subsisted between the ancient Jews and Persians: for, in truth, I cannot resist identifying these two nations in my thoughts: the cast of their countenances is the same, they have the same turn of mind and pursuits, and the affinity which existed between them in the ancient times to which I have alluded—the one as conquerors, and the others as conquered—may perhaps explain why at the present day the Jew is more persecuted and degraded in Persia than he is in any other country of the East. In the mean while, if you are not wholly dead to antiquity, do, pray, at least, be the medium of communication with antiquaries. Stir up our old friend and partner in work, Dustiman; place the subject before him, and let him work it out. I am satisfied to have made the discovery—let others explore the mine; and, if I mistake not, it will repay them amply. In the mean while, I shall continue to make researches; and when we meet, I hope to find you ready to listen to

the narrative of all my numerous adventures. Of the people with whom I now live, I shall indeed have much to say. In this part of Persia, they are a genuine people, — their faces are sculptured on the walls about me, and they answer in a thousand particulars to what is recorded of them in Herodotus, Xenophon, Curtius, P. Mela, Strabo, and many others. The former of these worthies flatters my predilection for the state of single blessedness whilst he describes their women as undeserving of regard ; which makes me suppose that they were the same worthless beings then that they are now. However, do not think that I say this to disqualify myself for my promise. As soon as I return, I will marry her whom you will set before me, without asking any questions — all I desire is that you make the selection. Find me a fitting person, and I marry ; but let me not be at the trouble of seeking her. When that time shall come, is much in the hands of *takdeer*, as the Persians say, and also at the mercy of Turkish Tatars, post-horses, and Surigees : but everything being propi-

tious, and no antiquities in the way, I may hope to be at the *Bab Homayan*, the Sublime Porte,—in other words, at Constantinople,—in about three months from this time.

“ Ever, my dear Roger,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ PEREGRINE OLDBOURN.

“ P.S. By the bye, there is one thing I have always had on my mind to tell you, but which somehow or other I have omitted from press of other matter ; — which is, that a few nights before I left London, at an evening party at Lady—I forget who’s, I was made much of by a Mrs. Somebody and a very charming daughter of hers, to whom I fear I said many things which might have made her suppose that I had followed your wish in proposing marriage : but no such thing, to the best of my knowledge, took place,—at least I am sure that I did not intend it ; although I found, to my dismay, in turning over the things in my baggage, that I had brought away the young lady’s Cashmerian scarf, which I fear I put into my pocket, taking it, I suppose,

for my pocket-handkerchief. I quite forget the young lady's name, and her mamma's; although I think somebody said that she was the daughter of the member for York, or Cork, or some such place, and that he was celebrated for having made two famous speeches, one for, and the other against, some famous measure. Whichever way it may be, of this be certain, that I am not bound to any young lady in the world,—at least, I don't think I am."

CHAPTER III.

The death of a bachelor described, who was sorry that he had not married.

THE letter which we have placed before our reader had taken six months to reach its destination, by the route of India; and when delivered into Sir Roger's hands, he was living in the family mansion in the country, confined by a violent paroxysm of gout, which had attacked him after a long previous state of delicate health. Although its contents gave him great delight, particularly as it proved his brother's excellent state of health, yet the now predominant desire of his mind,—namely, to see that brother married,—was left unsatisfied. He willingly would have sought that wife whom Peregrine promised to take to himself

as soon as he should reach England, were he in a state to execute such a commission ; but he was obliged to put it off, hoping that after the restoration of his health he would be able to bestir himself effectually. But Sir Roger's hopes were never destined to be realised : fit succeeded fit ; the constitution, vamped up in one place, gave way in another : on one day hope predominated, on the next despair ; — thus the decay gained ground till the decrepit baronet was announced by his physicians to be in a dangerous state ; and it was gradually broken to him, that if he had any disposal to make of his worldly affairs, he should lose no time in so doing.

Mr. Fairfax, his solicitor, was immediately sent for ; and soon after a post-chaise was seen bowling along the sweeping road that led through the park, and stopped at the door, where several anxious well-dressed lacqueys were waiting the arrival of its tenant. It disgorged a little business-like looking gentleman, who, by his assiduity in attending upon the commands of others, appeared to have no time

left to think a moment about himself, was straightway ushered into the presence of the impatient baronet. He approached the sick man with cautious step, who, wrapped up from head to foot in flannel, looked like the corpse which ere long he was destined to become, were it not for the still bright intelligence of his eye, which proclaimed that vitality so tardy in becoming extinct would keep him hovering on the brink of eternity for some time, ere the scene closed upon him for ever.

With slow and painful speech he addressed Mr. Fairfax as soon as he was made aware of his presence, and said, "I have been advised to send for you,—I am glad you are come,—life I know is uncertain, and I would wish to reconsider my will."

Fairfax upon this said the usual consolatory words, called for pen, ink and paper, and settled himself before a table to write.

"I know that it is appointed for us all to die, and so I must think what is best to do. Peregrine is not yet returned; that letter" (showing the one which we have before mentioned)

“makes his return uncertain. Still he must be made to marry, or else my estates will fall into other hands, which must be avoided. Considering his eccentricity of character, and his aversion to the marriage state, something must be done. Advise me, Mr. Fairfax.”

“You can make his entering into possession conditional,” said the lawyer.

“Can I?” said the baronet: “that’s some comfort.”

“Yes, certainly,” said Fairfax; “conditional upon his marrying within a certain time.”

“But mind ye,” said Sir Roger, becoming animated, “the conditions must be such that the contingency of the property falling to my nephew must be rendered very improbable. Peregrine is my brother,—my beloved brother!” he added with a deep-drawn sigh: “God protect him! he is of the true stock of the Oldbourns. I would that I had married! I have been too much wedded to my books to care for anything else; but he must. We must contrive something:—we must get

him a wife, — a young, healthy wife of good family. Have you no wives to recommend?"

At this question Fairfax made a pause, as if the question was one so new in law as to puzzle his sagacity. "No, no! we do not keep a disposable stock for such occasions," he said, smiling at the strangeness of the demand.

"A wife must be prepared for him,—that is the object I wish to accomplish," said the baronet.

"That may be done," said the lawyer; "but it must be stipulated that if he does not marry within a certain time, then he forfeits the estate and it goes to your nephew."

"Not so fast," said the sick man with a groan: "can't he be obliged to marry and get the estate too?"

"That could not be," said Fairfax; "you cannot impose a condition without a forfeit,—the whole of our life is made up of conditions and forfeits."

At this remark the poor dying man sank on his pillow. "But," said the lawyer, seeing he

had said too much, and raising his voice,—
“But if Mr. Peregrine knows that he is to lose an estate worth ten thousand pounds a-year if he does not marry within a certain reasonable time, then, unless he be a madman, —which I believe he is not,—you can have no doubt but that your wishes will be accomplished; you will have compelled him to marry.”

“Shall I?” said Sir Roger with a faint smile: “then let us compel him by all means. But we must give him plenty of time to return home—we must not run him hard—we must get him an undeniable wife—we must not be hard upon Peregrine. The antiquities of the family are entailed, though the estate is not—entail my collection upon him too; and do not forget the illustrated copy of my Dissertation upon the Siege of Troy: let him have everything. You will find the catalogues here, all in good order: let everything be for him without a condition, except the house and estate.”

“But you must describe your nephew,” said

the lawyer, after he had made a note of his client's wishes concerning his brother: "what is his name—where and what is he?"

"My nephew!" exclaimed the baronet as if he had received a sudden shock. "True, I have a nephew,—I wish I knew where he was: he is my nephew—my own poor sister's son." Then appearing absorbed in mental agony, he slowly said, "I have never seen him—I know not where he is: I fear this is wrong, very wrong. Mr. Fairfax, you must find him out for me immediately; and perhaps I may see him before—" (there he paused, still more distressed,)—"before I die.—But I may still live—I am not so bad as that yet; perhaps I may still see Peregrine—poor fellow! But find out my nephew: his name is Edward—Edward Manby;—he is to be heard of at Liverpool. I ought to have been more kind to that youth;—you must find him and send him to me immediately—something may be done: I will recommend him to Peregrine,—he shall do something for him,—I am sure he will, for he has a good heart, although he may

be a little odd. I believe Edward lives with his——” he would have said uncle, but pride prevented the utterance of that word and it died on his lips. “He is to be found at Liverpool—I dare say the name is well known there;—send for him.”

“I will,” said Fairfax; and he immediately made a note to that effect.

Fairfax having succeeded in acquiring all the information necessary for drawing out the will, soon returned with it to receive the testator’s signature with all the proper witnesses. It was drawn up, leaving everything to his brother provided he married within six months from the time of the baronet’s decease. The inquiries which he had set on foot concerning Edward Manby had not proved successful in producing his presence. This piece of intelligence served much to embitter the last days of the dying baronet, who, although relieved by the act of making and closing his will, could not but feel that he had committed one long act of injustice in his behaviour to his nephew. He endeavoured to palliate it, and

conceived that he had sufficiently done so, by leaving him a legacy, and by the stipulations of the will ; which were, that should he succeed to the family possessions, he was to change his name and to adopt that of Oldbourn. He thought thus to have achieved a family conquest, and to have taken a great weight of dishonour from off the shoulders of his nephew. He did not long survive the transaction we have just recorded ; but surrounded by all the exterior mockery of woe, whilst the true desolation was within, he was gathered to his fathers, and his death was trumpeted forth with eulogiums for his learning and his patronage of art, and his constitutional principles, and his various accomplishments ; whilst that smaller eulogium in human estimation, his love of God, for which he would have given worlds, did not find its way into the pompous epitaph inscribed upon his tomb. The only consolation which he enjoyed before he breathed his last, was the reception of a letter from his brother announcing his arrival at Constantinople ; a fact of importance in the legal ar-

rangements about to be made. As soon as the funeral was over, Mr. Fairfax determined to despatch some confidential person to seek out the new baronet, wherever he might be, having previously written the proper letter, announcing the death of the late dignitary.

Mark Woodcock, as we have before explained, was nominated to perform this service; and as the arrangement which took place on that occasion will throw some light upon the parties concerned, we will briefly narrate the conversation which took place on that occasion. On the morning when Mr. Fairfax had made up his mind on the subject, he sent for Mark, who was busily employed, pen in hand, his head poring over parchment at his desk, and addressed him as follows:

“Mr. Woodcock, I have business of some importance to speak to you upon. I believe you talk French very well?”

“Yes, sir, I do,” said Mark.

“I hope I can depend upon your activity, discretion, and prudence.”

“ I hope you can, sir,” said Mark, looking astonished.

“ Do you know whereabouts Constantinople is ?” said Mr. Fairfax.

“ Constantinople !” said Mark ; “ whereabouts it is ?—is it not the capital of Turkey ?” looking still more astonished.

“ To be sure it is,” said Mr. Fairfax ; “ but should you know how to get at it ?”

Mark paused for a while—looked up, then down, and then said, “ How to get at it, did you say ? No, sir ;—do you ?”

This question puzzled the chief as much as it did his clerk ; who, putting as good a face upon his ignorance as he could, said, “ I have never been there myself ; but I suppose when once you are well on the high road to it, a good post-chaise and post-horses will take you there fast enough.”

“ I dare say the Indian,” said Mark,—“ him they call the nabob, who comes here sometimes about his claims,—would be able to tell us all about it : his country and Constantinople are both in the East.”

“It is possible he may,” said the learned solicitor; “and you may immediately make all the proper inquiries. It is my intention to send you immediately to seek Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, who has lately arrived at Constantinople, with papers of consequence; and you must prepare yourself to start immediately.”

“Very well, sir,” said Mark with a thrill of joy darting through him; “I will get ready immediately:” and he was about leaving the room, when, reflecting a moment, he said, “Am I to let my beard grow?”

The man of parchment with a smile said, “I suppose you must do what is usual on such occasions: but recollect, prudence before everything.”

Mark, from the moment he had got permission to let his beard grow, felt that having once given the reins to the persevering hairs, they would grow with increased vigour; and flattering himself that with a beard on his chin, and with French in his mouth, he had obtained every requisite to make a perfect Eastern traveller, he immediately hastened to see

the Allnutts, as we have already described in the foregoing volume, to inform them of this new turn in his fortunes.

The result was, that ere many days had elapsed, Mark Woodcock, after having undergone the previous labour of getting a passport, securing letters of credit, and packing his portmanteau, was duly installed as a passenger on board the steam-boat bound for Rotterdam. The only trait worth recording before he left England was this, that by way of showing off his French at the passport-office, he insisted upon being called *Monsieur Bécasse*; for which he found himself so considerably laughed at, that he was satisfied to keep his knowledge in that tongue for better purposes.

CHAPTER IV.

*A cockney's travels through Europe, and his descent among
the Turks.*

WE would at once willingly take our reader to Mr. Mark Woodcock's arrival at Constantinople, whither we beg leave to announce that he succeeded in arriving in safety, could we withstand the temptation of knowing what so pure a cockney thought and felt during his passage through scenes so totally new to him, and of which we conclude our reader would be as happy to be informed as ourselves. We therefore do not hesitate in giving the following extract of a journal which he kept, and which indeed he had been desired to keep by his chief.

“ On board the London steamer, bound for Rotterdam.

“ LEFT St. Katharine's Dock at six o'clock in the morning: a great deal of company on board. There was a fellow who wanted to seize hold of my portmanteau and carpet-bag; but I soon let him know who he had got to deal with. I had no sooner put my great-coat on a place to secure a seat, than a lady tossed it away and sat down herself. I thought that this might be the beginning of foreign manners people talk so much of, and as she was a lady, I said nothing, but went down into the cabin to secure a berth. The man asked me, 'What name?' I said, 'Woodcock.'—'Woodcock,' said he, looking over a list; 'we have no Woodcocks here:—here are two Partridges though,' said he, 'if that will do, and one Hare.'—'None of your nonsense,' said I, thinking that he was laughing at me: 'I am not to be run down in this manner, if you please.'—'I beg your pardon, sir,' said he; 'I really had no thought of making game of you.' I believe the fellow was a wag; and as he allowed me to take a place

on a shining black sofa, with a shining black bolster to lay my head on, I said no more.

“ There was a Dutch steamer that set off at the same time that we did; but we soon showed her what an English steamer can do. The Dutchman had no chance with us; and I soon found that it was quite true what I had often heard before, that a Dutchman can't run: we saw nothing more of him after we had passed Deptford.

“ I found a Frenchman on board, and I determined to try some of my French upon him; so when we were passing Greenwich Hospital, I went up to him and said, ‘ *Est-ce que vous n'avez pas rien comme celui-ci en France?*’ The man stared, and making a bow, he said, ‘I no understand English.’ I never saw such a fool in my life, for I thought at least that a Frenchman could understand his own language.

“ We went on very prosperously, although the dinner was uncommonly bad, — the beef tough, the cabbage not half boiled, and the beer flat: but there was good music, and a

fellow who played capitally upon the key-bugle and made a glorious noise. It was all very well until we came off Margate; but there it began to blow, and the company to look very uncomfortable. I was determined it should not be said that a man going to Constantinople was sick, so I bore up against it most manfully for some time, whistling and looking into other people's faces: but what could one do against the whole ocean! I felt uncommonly unpleasant, and lay down upon the horse-hair sofa quite distressed. Mr. Partridge and son soon came tumbling over me to get to their resting-place, and Mr. Hare moaned as if he had been shot. I never shall forget what a miserable time I passed: I wished myself back in Lincoln's-inn a thousand times, and vowed that nothing again should ever take me out of England by sea. I never slept a wink all night, and I should like to know who could with all the horrid noises about one's ears—Mr. Hare's in particular; but at last morning came, and we got in sight of the Dutch coast, and there the sea became smooth. After a great deal of

zig-zagging, and what is, I suppose, called inland navigation, we reached the city of Rotterdam, in Holland, all the natives being Dutchmen. The cows are certainly fine ; but as for their sheep, I did not see one, — although there were many windmills, and other implements of agriculture. Nothing, however, like the chimneys of our steam-engines did I see along the river, nor one patent-shot manufactory, which are so very handsome, and make the glory of old England. When I got on shore, I felt well all of a sudden ; which is extraordinary, considering what a long voyage we had made. I was taken up before the mayor about my passport ; and when he found that I was going to Constantinople, he looked at me and let me go. We all sat down to dinner at a thing they call the *table d'hôte*, which they might as well have called an ordinary, for it was exactly like one : and I must say this for them, that they had good fish, — although they hav'n't a notion of melted butter. They can show nothing like our meat, although they talk a good deal about it ; and indeed it was

all very half-and-half sort of work compared with England.

“ After dinner I walked out to see the city ; and I was bothered out of my wits by a jabbering fellow who pretended to talk English, to go and see the statue of one Erasmus, whoever he may be : but when I came to see it, it was not to be compared to the statue of Queen Anne standing with her back to St. Paul’s. And then he wanted to take me to the tombs of two admirals ; but I said we had admirals enough at home, and that our Nelson would beat all they could show. The best of it was, after I had killed myself in taking a walk with this fellow, he insisted upon my paying him, saying he was a lacquey out of place ; but I sent him packing, for it was no fault of mine if he was out of place.

“ There are hundreds of bridges here ; but I am quite certain, were they all put together, they would not make one Waterloo, nor one New London Bridge. Then I heard so much of Dutch cleanliness !—I am sure I saw none of it in the men, or women either,—nothing

to talk about. They were sluicing their windows, 'tis true, with water and hand-pumps, and washing out their houses from morning till night ; but that is not cleanliness : I should like to look at their teeth, and their linen, and their nails, — there is where an Englishman looks for cleanliness.

“ The next day we set off in a Dutch steamer to go up the Rhine, a large river that winds up ever so far inland. There were some English people and a great many foreigners on board. The Frenchman who had come by the steamer from London was among them ; and as he had found out that I could talk his language, we became friends, and he borrowed some stivers of me.

“ At night we got to a place where we were to sleep. As soon as the boat arrived, everybody rushed out to get a bed, and I among the number ; but I was surprised to find what beasts I had got amongst : they made nothing of sleeping half a dozen in one room, and some of them two in one bed ! However, there was no help for it ; and as I could no more set my-

self up against foreign manners than I could prevent my being in Holland, I got into a bed in a room where there were seven other beds besides mine, and men inside them. I had no sooner taken possession than I perceived the Frenchman looking about for a berth ; and as he found them all occupied, to my astonishment, I perceived him as cool as a cucumber take up my bedclothes and prepare to come into bed to me. I immediately cried out, ‘D—n it ! *que voulez-vous ?*’ He still persisted, and was coming in outright, when I exclaimed, ‘No, this is too bad !—*C’est trop mauvais !*—upon which I lifted up my leg and kicked him clean out into the middle of the room. He came down with a great bounce, and cried out some of his odd words which denote rage. The noise he made awoke the others, who all poked their heads out, and in various languages made their complaints, until I was obliged to get out and expel the Frenchman by force, and locked the door upon him. We then all slept till the morning, when we proceeded on our journey ; but I never saw *Mounseer* again — and

he walked off without paying what he owed me.

“After this we got to Cologne, the place where the Eau de Cologne is made. I asked a fellow who understood a little French, where the Eau was made (for Eau means water), and he pointed to the river. I said, ‘That will never do—I am not going to believe that all that smelling-water made up in long bottles packed in boxes, which is sold in England, is nothing but water taken out of this river!’ I soon let him know I was not to be taken in, for who could doubt that the fellow lied? Cologne, however, is the very place in which it is made.

“We then proceeded in a larger and grander vessel, full of ladies and gentlemen, and got among mountains and old castles. Everybody seemed delighted, and called it the finest thing they had ever seen; but, for my part, I would rather take a row from London Bridge to Richmond, any day of the week, and dine at Eel-pie Island, which to my mind is a much neater place than anything we saw here. There

was no end to the castles we passed, not one half as good as Windsor Castle, and thousands of towns besides. Then we saw the place where the wine called 'old hock' is made: they say it is *new* here, although we always get it *old* in England.

"In two days I got to a large city called Francfort, full of Jews as it could hold, and, I need not say, called very rich; although, in truth, nothing is rich out of England—not even a Jew. I then took my place in a sort of stage-coach, not much better than our fish-carts that go between Portsmouth and London; and this, to my surprise, was called an '*Eel-waggon*;' so that they take everything from us, even to their fish-carts, although these carry men and women passengers. This coach was to take me to Prague, the city where the battle was fought, and which I had heard Miss Fanny Allnutt so frequently play on the pianoforte. I determined when I got there to see the field of battle itself, and to find out the exact spot where the prisoners groaned, in order to tell Miss Fanny all about it when I saw her again; but the people were

so stupid that they could not understand me. They always said ‘*Ya, ya,*’ to all I said; but no field of battle did they show me, although I talked to them by the hour in French.

“We set off again; and there was an Englishman in the coach, to whom I imparted that I was going to Constantinople. When he heard that, he behaved with great respect, for he immediately began talking very learnedly about the Roman Empire, and Gibson’s Climb and Fall, and Bajazet, and Timur the Tartar, taking me for a traveller going out to write a book. I had seen Timur the Tartar at Astley’s, and therefore I let him know that I was not ignorant on that head. When we came to the stage called Dutchbrod, he took me up to one of the windows and pointed out what he called a curious inscription, thinking that as I was likely to publish it would do for me. Not to undeceive him, I did copy it; and sure enough it was curious, for there was something about a neat postchaise, and horses and harness. It was this:

‘ In questa casa trovarete
Toutes es choses que vous souhaitez ;
Vinum bonum, costes, carnes,
Neat postchaise, and horse and harness.’

My companion called it a polyglot inscription, whatever that may be, and said that in years to come it would puzzle the learned, as I am sure it did me.

“ We travelled several days, and at length reached the capital of Germany. I never was in such a rage in all my life as on the day we reached this place. I called it Vienna, because it is always called so in England by all people, and by all the members of parliament (and they know better than any one); but an obstinate pig of a German persisted in calling it ‘*Ween*.’ However, I was determined that nothing should *wean* me out of what was right, so I continued pronouncing it ‘Vienna.’

“ I did not stay long in this place, where I understood nobody, and where nobody understood me; but after I had left it, I was very sorry not to have seen a thing which my travelling companion in the eel-waggon assured me was to be seen here, and that was the

famous House of Austria. He assured me that it was the oldest house certainly in Europe, and perhaps in the world; and that the Emperor of Austria lived in it. I think that would have been a curiosity worth looking at—and I might have carried away a bit of one of the old bricks, to give to Miss Mary, had I thought of it. But now it was too late; and I came to a country where everybody talked Latin, down to the postboys. I was longing all the way to recollect some of the Latin I had learnt at school; but, do what I could, I never could get out more than *As in præsentis*. I did once try to make a handsome housemaid understand that I thought her so; and pointing to her face, I said, *Pulcher*, fair; *pulcherrima*, fairest: but that would do; and I think she said, *Tu es asinus*, and went away laughing. That was the only adventure I had in Hungary."

It appears, after this, that our traveller, having reached the confines of Wallachia, proceeded with too much speed through that wild country to have had time or opportunity to

write down his observations. Mounted upon a little open cart without springs, peculiar to Wallachia, and dragged with unceasing velocity by four horses through every impediment of mud and filth, he could do little else than ejaculate his execrations at the country, and compare it with England. We can conceive no human torture superior to that which a pampered cockney would suffer in being transferred at once from the corner of a comfortable stage-coach to a seat in a Wallachian post-cart ; and although Mark had experienced a tolerable gradation of discomforts ere he got thus far, still he could not contain his rage when, having arrived at Bucharest, he found himself bumped into a mass of dirt and mud.

“By the time he reached Constantinople, the youth who started from Lincoln’s-inn so fair and spruce, was transformed into one so dirty and weather-beaten, that none of his acquaintance could have recognised him had they seen him thus. His glossy hat was slouched ; the colour of his coat was undefinable ; and his beard and mustaches, which he had tended

with increasing anxiety, were just sufficiently grown to make them the torment of his existence. Experience had not yet taught him that the manners and customs of nations must ever differ according to their various wants and necessities; for, comparing what he saw to what he had left in England, he never could understand why the Turks, possessing the most beautiful empire in the world, with every local advantage, should still have no other mode of travelling than on horseback, — should sit cross-legged, when they might sit on chairs, — should eat with their fingers, when knives and forks are to be had, — and should, in short, be in almost every respect the very reverse of what mankind are in England. In truth, Mark, at Constantinople, standing on the quay at Tophana, where he had landed, was as much a cockney as when he embarked in the steamer for Rotterdam.

CHAPTER V.

*Mark Woodcock and Peregrine Oldbourn.—Contrast
between a cockney and an antiquary.*

IN the mean while, Peregrine Oldbourn, after many deviations from the straight road, successfully made his way from Persepolis, where we last left him, to Constantinople. He might perhaps have ended his days in the former place from sheer absence of mind, entirely wrapt up in the absorbing discovery which he had made, had not his long stay there been remarked by the authorities, who, supposing he was seeking those treasures which fame reports to be there extant, had sent him a message to quit. He therefore took his departure, but came to another full stop at the ruins of the ancient Pasargarda, where

his enthusiasm again broke out in the contemplation of what he could not doubt to be the tomb of Cyrus. Full of the recollections of the grandeur and achievements of that celebrated personage, he performed many extraordinary feats at his shrine ; he passed one whole night extended in the identical narrow chamber where he supposed his hero's ashes to have once reposed ; and conceiving himself to be the actual Cyrus, he did nothing but exclaim as he lay on his back, " O mortals ! I am Cyrus, son of Cambyses, founder of the Persian monarchy and sovereign of Asia : grudge me not therefore this monument ! " He walked round and round the tomb with all the humility and devotion of a pilgrim, and behaved with such grave reverence, that the natives, taking him for an English dervish travelling with the intention of fulfilling some penitential vow, treated him with high consideration.

He then proceeded to Ispahan, where he tarried but a short time, because it offered him but little antiquarian attraction, and thence

to Teheran, where he passed several days in tracing the ruins of the ancient Rages, rendered famous in Scripture History by the history of Tobit. From thence he sought the remains of Ecbatana, in the modern city of Hamadan; and travelling northwards, made an attempt to ascend the Mountain of Ararat. Encountering sundry dangers in passing the frontier from Persia to Turkey, he continued his researches right and left through the ancient Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia, until at length he reached Constantinople in safety.

There he first learnt the death of his brother, communicated by a letter from Mr. Fairfax; who at the same time making him acquainted with the provisions of the will, announced the approaching arrival of a messenger despatched to seek him wherever he might be, in order that no impediment should be cast in the way of fulfilling those provisions. Sincerely attached to his brother, he mourned his loss with a true and poignant grief, without reflecting upon the conditions imposed upon him ere he became possessor of his fortune. He de-

ferred making any plans as to his return to England until the arrival of the promised messenger; and determined to await him at Symrna in preference to Constantinople, for he wished to visit the plains of Troy ere he quitted Asia; and thus, as he conceived, he would honour the memory of his departed brother, by examining on the spot the merit of those arguments which he had put forward in his celebrated essay touching the history of the siege.

When Mark Woodcock reached Constantinople, his first step was to ascertain where the new baronet was to be found; and, to his dismay, he heard that he must still travel on some two or three hundred miles. Sir Peregrine had omitted to do that which every man of reflection would have done; — that is, to have left directions what course the messenger was to pursue, and appointed him a rendezvous at some specified time and place.

The bewildered Londoner, in the new and curious world into which he had fallen, could scarcely recover his astonishment at all he saw,

nor his regret at the necessity which impelled him still to travel onwards. Of Smyrna he had scarcely heard, excepting as a cognomen to figs; and from what he had already seen of travelling in Turkey, he was not ambitious of extending his geographical knowledge in that country. Faithful, however, to the trust reposed in him, and anxious to accomplish the object of his mission with as little delay as possible, he would not allow himself to tarry at Constantinople to satisfy his curiosity, but determined at once to proceed.

The little that he did see of the great Mahomedan capital gave him but little desire to inspect more; for in walking through the great bazaar, to his surprise he first saw a man with his ear nailed to his own door, composedly smoking his pipe, who, upon inquiry, he found was a baker undergoing punishment for using false weights. Walking still further on, upon looking up, his face had nearly struck against the feet of a Jew hung up under his own shed; and again, at the meeting of four streets, he discovered a dead body re-

cently decapitated, and the head, by way of honour, placed under the arm, denoting a true believer, in contradistinction to that of an infidel, who would have had it placed between the legs.

Mark was perfectly horrified at what he saw, and anxiously inquired if these were common practices. He was informed that the grand vizier had just been making his rounds—for being new in office, he was determined thus to establish his authority, showing the inhabitants how well he could make them keep the peace. “Cutting off their heads!—that is one way of making them keep the peace, however!” exclaimed Mark.

Upon passing the royal arsenal in front of Tophana in a boat, suddenly, without the smallest notice being given, several loaded guns were fired exactly in the direction in which he was proceeding; and the balls fell all around, and one so near his boat, that the spray overwhelmed him.

“Holloa!” cried Mark, and looked frightened and alarmed.

“*Bir chey yok!*—it is nothing,” said his grey-bearded boatman. “*Kismet*—fate.”

Mark afterwards learnt that the Turkish engineers were proving some new guns. His horror increased every moment that he spent at Constantinople; and when it is considered how strong were his national prejudices and how contracted the span of his mind, one need not be surprised at it. Little did he know of governments beyond his own—little did he know of their theory, less still of their practice. He had witnessed enough tyranny in one day at Constantinople to have formed the foundation of a dozen revolutions in England. Here he saw men hung about and killed like mad dogs, nailed to door-posts, and fired at without a warning; and he wondered that the whole country did not rise up in a mass to resent such wickedness. No coroner’s inquest, no indictments, no judge, no jury!—without such things, he thought within himself, how can a country exist? “Well,” he said, “if I ever live to get back to England, I think I’ll make them stare a bit in Lincoln’s-inn.”

He proceeded at once to the consul, and entreated him to forward his departure to Smyrna as soon as possible, asserting that he would not live in such a country an hour longer than he could help, were he promised to be created lord chancellor the moment he had left it.

“My dear sir,” said the consul, “if summary justice were not exhibited here, we should not be able to sleep secure in our beds. It is quite necessary to kill a few, in order to keep the rest quiet.”

“They are not worthy to live,” said Mark, “if they won’t stick up for their rights.”

“A Turk has no rights,” said the consul, “but what the sultan chooses to give him.”

“Then I would hang the sultan,” said Mark. “I should like to see him before a grand jury for Middlesex!—they would find a true bill against him as sure as fate; and then I should like to know how he would look! Why, we should hang him up as round as a hoop before he could put in a word for himself!”

Being provided with a Turkish Tatar to accompany him, Mark crossed the Sea of Marmora in a five-oared boat, and landed at Moalitch, where he procured post-horses and proceeded to Smyrna by the usual route. He picked up a few words of Turkish on the road,—learnt to drink his thimbleful of coffee without sugar, to smoke through a cherry-stick pipe, and to eat with his fingers. For each of these feats he promised himself to gain much credit when he related them to his friends in Lincoln's-inn. Often, too, did he cast his thoughts upon the Allnutts, and particularly on Mary, enjoying by anticipation all the wonder he should excite in their breasts by the description he would give of his travels.

Having rested himself in a coffee-house for a few hours in the city of Magnesia, he then crossed the rugged pass over Mount Sipylus, and at length descended into the beautiful plain of Smyrna, terminated by the sea and its magnificent harbour, and surrounded by mountains and slopes at once verdant and sublime. He rubbed his hands in ecstasy

on seeing a country which had the appearance of civilisation, and which, as he approached the city, held out the promise of a good dinner, (of which he was greatly in want,) preparatory to accomplishing the object of his journey ; for he hoped to see Sir Peregrine on that very evening.

He passed long strings of camels laden with the different produce of Asia Minor, going to the great mart ; and as he remarked and smiled at their slow pace, he chuckled within himself when he reflected upon the speed with which things were carried on in his own country. How he yearned for the top of a stage-coach ! —how he groaned for the velocity of steam ! At length, after being buffeted about on his jaded post-horse in the crowded streets, first struck by the side of a bale of cotton, then knocked back by a box of figs, he succeeded in entering the long court-yard of the hotel. Here he dismounted, and being received by a Greek waiter who spoke a few words of every living language, and perhaps thoroughly understood none, he was delighted to find that in that

very house lived the object of his long search—
Sir Peregrine Oldbourn.

Forgetting the good dinner which he had promised himself to eat, he at once desired to be introduced into his presence ; which was done forthwith—and perhaps on the face of the globe two such originals both in character and appearance never stood erect before each other. Sir Peregrine eyed Mark from head to foot, whilst Mark did the same to Sir Peregrine. The former, a tall lank figure, with swarthy face and long perpendicular features, was accoutred in fragments of dress selected from each country through which he had travelled. Turkey furnished him with a red cloth cap ; Persia, with a pair of crimson silk trousers of the most ample dimensions. He wore an English swallow-tailed coat, and waistcoat ; and his feet were shod with the high-heeled green slippers of the court of Teheran. Crape was wound round his cap ; and his coat was black, for he was in mourning.

Mark, too, had been obliged to borrow from Asia to replace that which he had worn-out in

Europe ; for over his trousers he wore a pair of crimson Morocco boots as large as buckets ; he had bought a party-coloured cloak which covered him with many folds ; and his coat being worn-out, he had accoutred himself in his dressing-gown. His naturally fair face had been baked by the joint action of the sun and wind into a compound of villanous colours ; and his beard growing therefrom did not add much to his beauty. Mark looked upon Sir Peregrine as the greatest curiosity he had seen since he left England ; whilst Sir Peregrine thought that his countrymen must have altered much since his absence from home, if they resembled at all the one who now stood before him.

Mark having delivered his letter of introduction and the several despatches of which he was the bearer, Sir Peregrine, in a courteous and friendly manner, invited him to refresh himself by shaking off the dust of his journey, and then to join him at dinner, when they would talk over the object of his mission. Mark joyfully obeyed this summons, but not before he had cast an eye over the room which

the baronet then inhabited. It was crowded with an immense variety of things of which Mark knew neither the use nor the value. Fragments of marble covered with Greek inscriptions, pieces of broken statues, ancient bricks, bronzes, old coins, books, drawings, various sorts of arms,—in short, the numerous articles which a man of learning and research is apt to collect in furtherance of his pursuits, were all heaped together, without order or discrimination, but quite in keeping, as a painter would say, with the appearance and character of their owner. Mark pondered over these things in his mind, wondering what could be the use of so much rubbish, as he was pleased to call it: but whilst he pondered, he hastened to reappear, more to answer the calls of hunger than to associate with his new acquaintance.

After they had sat and eaten, Sir Peregrine said, “ So I perceive, Mr. Woodcock, by Mr. Fairfax’s letter, that the principal object of your journey is to settle upon the best mode of putting my lamented brother’s will into execution; — I mean that part of it which

relates to my marrying within a certain time. Six months, I think, is the term specified."

"Yes, sir," said Mark;—"that is, if you do not happen to be married already."

"I married!" exclaimed Sir Peregrine, starting from his chair; "Heaven forbid! Why, you do not suppose that I would marry a Mussulman?"

"No, Sir Peregrine,—no," said Mark; "I could not think that: but I do not see why you should not have married a Mussul-woman or a Mussul-girl."

"I am not mad enough to have done that, and it can never be," said Sir Peregrine, smiling, "because by my brother's will I am obliged to marry an Englishwoman of good family; therefore to marry an Asiatic is out of the question. But you must allow me to put you right upon the word 'Mussulman,' which, I perceive, like many of your countrymen, you have adopted as an English word: it is pure Arabic, and is applied to men and women indiscriminately, to denote those of the true faith, or the followers of Mahomed. But I fear I

am presumptuous in saying so much, — you perhaps may have acquired a knowledge of some of the Oriental tongues yourself?”

“No, sir, no,” said Mark, not in the least abashed; “I talk no Oriental tongue but French: I have picked up a few words of the Turkish,—just enough to say, ‘How d’ye do?’ and so forth.”

“And pray, what do you think of the Turkish language?” said the baronet. “It must be owned, its history is interesting, for it has travelled thus far even from the confines of China: it is the original Tartar language, although much intermixed with the Arabic and the Persic. What may you think of it? — I should like to know your opinion.”

Mark summoned up a look of wisdom, and, after some thought, said, “Why, Sir Peregrine, I think it is a very fair language—that’s my opinion of it.”

“Fair?” said the baronet; “ah, that is original! I have heard of a language being copious, energetic, and expressive; but I never heard of a fair language.”

“ I think it fair in this manner,” said Mark :
“ When I meet a man, he says to me *Hush bulldog* ; and then, as a matter of course, I answer, *Hush gelding*. Now, if he calls me a bull-dog, it is but fair that I should call him a gelding—and that is what I call a fair language.”*

“ Very good, very good,” said Sir Peregrine, amazingly tickled by this explanation,—“ I think you have made out your position perfectly ;” an acquiescence which flattered Mark’s vanity not a little, whilst his observations, in truth, afforded the baronet an insight into the capacity of his new acquaintance. Upon matters of business he found him, however, quick of apprehension, and worthy of his confidence ; whilst Mark, after a conversation which lasted till bed-time, retired fully persuaded how impossible it would be to put into execution one principal point of his instructions ; which was, to persuade the baronet to accompany him without delay to England.

* In truth, the usual mode of greeting among Turks is, *Hosh buldook*—well met ; and *Hosh geldin*—well come.

CHAPTER VI.

The antiquary makes a confidant of the attorney's clerk.

SIR PEREGRINE was one of those absent men, whose mind would grapple with a subject with acuteness and perseverance when brought immediately before him; but as soon as that subject was exhausted would relapse into the absorption of his own favourite pursuit. Having fully discussed the subject of Mark's mission, he for that night dismissed it from his mind; and on the following morning, when they met, he almost seemed to have forgotten the motive for his coming.

Too full of his own subject to be correct in names, he thus addressed Mark: — "I have a question to ask you, Mr. Cockwood, which perhaps you can answer."

“My name is Woodcock,” said Mark, looking much surprised.

“True, sure,” said the other; “I beg your pardon: but pray, Mr. Woodcock, in your journey from Constantinople, I think you came by Magnesia?”

“Did I?” said Mark. “I don’t know the names of the odd places.”

“But you know that there are two Magnesias?” said the baronet.

“Are there?” said Mark; “that may be, but I only know of one—the best, and that is *Henry’s calcined*.”

“I mean the city,” said Peregrine, smiling,—“the city you passed on the other side of yonder mountain. That Magnesia is called *ad Syphilum*, to distinguish it from the other farther to the west, which is called *ad Meandrum*. Now you know it is supposed that the famous murder of Niobe’s children was committed near the road on which you travelled: did you remark anything?”

“Murder, sir!” said Mark. “You may be

sure that is as great a lie as ever was uttered. The road was as safe and as quiet when I passed it, as any part of the road between London and Brighton."

"You mistake me," said the baronet: "I do not mean what has happened at the present day—I mean the murder of Niobe's children by Apollo, as described in Ovid. You are acquainted with the famous lines, beginning *Lydia tota fremit*, and so on: well, it is supposed the whole transaction took place near Magnesia, and that Niobe's statue,—you know she was turned into a statue — you remember the famous description,

' Nullos movet aura capillos,
In vultu color est sine sanguine; lumina moestis
Stant immota genis: nihil est in imagine vivi,'

and so on;—well, her statue is said to be seen on the summit of a hill, represented by a large stone, in the form of a weeping woman. Now, did you see such a stone?"

"I saw many large stones," said Mark; "but I did not see that one,—of that I am quite positive. You may be certain it is all

a hoax, Sir Peregrine: you know those old writers were such liars, nobody believes anything about them now;—nobody believes anything about Jupiter, or Juno, or the Elgin Marbles, or any of that of sort trash, now-a-days.”

The baronet, finding that he could elicit no information from Mark upon the researches which now particularly filled his mind, reverted to the subject which he fondly hoped would class his name among the celebrated travellers of the day. “You had no doubt heard of my discovery before you left England?” he said with confidence.

“I know of no discovery,” said Mark with hesitation, “unless it be the North Pole. Did you discover that too? Everybody seems to have discovered that!”

“No,” said the baronet with some little pique of expression,—“No, I have not been northward — I have only travelled in the South.”

“Well, then, perhaps it was the South Pole,” said Mark: “I know there are two

poles — I know that something was discovered.”

“I have seen nothing of the poles,” said the other: “I mean my discovery relative to the Temple of Solomon.”

“No,” said Mark, “I have heard nothing about that.”

“That is extraordinary,” said Sir Peregrine, “because I look upon it as one of the greatest discoveries made during this century; for if so, we have acquired the true and indisputable type of all church architecture. Do not you suppose now, Mr. Woodcock,” addressing Mark with increasing energy, “that the model and the style of building of the Temple of Solomon having been once ascertained, every new church in England,—ay, throughout Christendom,—will be erected upon that model?”

“I hope you will arrive in time in England,” said Mark, always keeping an eye to the object of his mission, “to stop the building of Marybone Church, and the new one at Brighton.”

“ I hope I may,” said the enthusiast ; “ I am quite sure that the arguments which I have brought forward, and which are given in full detail in that manuscript,” pointing to a pile of closely-written paper, “ are quite unanswerable : for, Mr. Woodcock, between you and me,—and I don’t wish this to go further,—I have acquired such a mass of evidence in support of my case, that I am quite certain to carry it in spite of all opposition.”

“ Juries are ticklish things now-a-days,” said Mark ; “ they require a monstrous deal of evidence before they will give a verdict.”

“ I can prove,” said the eager baronet, not heeding Mark’s observation,—“ I can prove that the Darius Hystaspes of Grecian history and the Darab of the Persians are one and the same person ; and that Darab and Jemsheed, who is said to be the original founder of Persepolis, are frequently identified ; and therefore the objection which may be alleged,—namely, that the present ruins being called in the Persic, *Takht Jemsheed*, or the throne of Jemsheed, must necessarily have been built by that king,

falls to the ground. I think I have fully proved that."

"I think you have," said Mark, totally unmoved.

"I can also prove," said the other, "that the Jews and Persians of those days had great intercourse; and that Jewish influence being predominant at the court of Darius Hystaspes, it is fair to suppose, that monarch having ordered the continuation of the building of their temple, might have also commanded a palace or a temple of the same style and character to be built for himself; and thence the great structure of Persepolis, of which we see the remains at the present day. I can prove that beyond all contradiction."

"Can you indeed!" said Mark, looking more stolid than before.

"I can prove, too, that it does not in the least signify whether Herodotus makes mention of the Jews or not, (although I think he does by what he says of circumcision,) because as they were but a very small tribe compared to the vast empire over which Darius reigned, they

might and did very naturally remain unnoticed by the historian, in the same manner that one of the present day, writing the history of England and its possessions, would most likely make no mention of some obscure tribe in India or Africa. I can prove that."

"When will he have proved everything?" said Mark in low accents to himself, beginning to get impatient at this demand upon his attention.

"Now, if you will promise to say nothing to any one, — mind, I say to no one, be he who he may," said Sir Peregrine with a cautious and beseeching look, — "I will show you something which I have never yet shown to mortal man. — Will you promise? — it will prove all I have said."

"Oh yes, I promise," said Mark, glad to have come to an end of proving.

"Well, then, here," said Sir Peregrine, who with great caution unlocked a drawer in his writing-desk, from which he took out a small box, upon opening which he drew forth some cotton, and out of the cotton he produced

a small brass nail,—“here lies the proof—the proof of all I have said!”

“Is it indeed!” said Mark: “a little goes a great way here, if that’s all.”

“Now, do you see this brass nail?” said the antiquary. “Well, this nail, such as you see it, is the work of the ancient Persians, or of Jewish workmen working for the Persian king. It was extracted from a stone gateway at Persepolis, and taken from the wig of a sculptured figure. Now, this nail was used to fasten plates of gold on the very marble, and, if I mistake not, on the very wig: and does not this prove all that I wish to explain? First, it proves that Jews and Persians were much identified in manners and customs. Here is a positive proof that the Persians wore their hair full and curling as an ornament: and do not we read in Jewish history that the Jews preserved their hair,—that is, it was allowed to grow as an ornament,—and as proved by its weight, it must have grown as thick and curly as the wigs we see sculptured on the marbles of Persepolis. In the

second place, it proves that the walls and sculptures of Persepolis were overlaid with gold, — a circumstance repeatedly mentioned as existing in the Temple of Solomon; and therefore it makes it clear in that respect the two buildings were exactly similar. I only ask you, now, would you require anything more?"

"No, I require nothing more," said Mark.

"I put it to you as an honest man — as a man of candour, as a man of understanding," said the baronet, highly excited by his subject, "whether you would require anything more than this nail—this small, though highly valuable nail—to be convinced that the Temple of Solomon was the prototype of the palace of Darius at Persepolis?"

Mark felt himself duly exalted by such a flattering appeal, and calling up a corresponding look of dignity, he allowed that the nail had done all that was required, and gave his testimony in favour of the baronet's theory; but, never forgetting the object of his journey, he said, "Surely you ought not to lose a

moment in returning to England, in order to publish to the world the fruits of your discovery. Why, there is the Penny Magazine would print everything that you have said without charging you a farthing; although I can't say as much for the other newspapers."

This observation produced the effect of turning Sir Peregrine's thoughts from his favourite theory and fixing them upon his future plans. He then informed Mark, that as according to his brother's will he had at least five months left for his homeward journey, he had determined to employ that time in making certain researches in the islands of the Archipelago, and at Athens; and that he then intended to charter a small brig, which would convey himself and his collections by sea to England. With respect to the wife, he declared that he intended to leave that part of the business entirely in the hands of Mr. Fairfax, who would be empowered to procure for him a person corresponding in every respect to the provisions of the will, who must be ready to receive and

be united to him the moment he arrived in London.

When Mark heard this explanation of the baronet's intention, his first impulse was to shake his head and doubt; for he had seen enough of him to remain satisfied that left to himself, and particularly if his mind was set upon some new discovery, he would forget all time and space, all obligations to fulfil his brother's wishes, and ultimately lose that fortune of which he was intended to be the possessor. But, pondering deeper, suddenly a bright thought flashed across his mind. He conceived he might be the means of making the fortune of his friend Mary Allnutt, and rescuing her uncle and aunts from poverty; his heart beat with joyful anticipation at such a prospect. She, in fact, answered in every respect to the person described in the will; for she was at once healthy, of good conduct, and of good family. Mark, with this benevolent intention,—never having himself ventured to aspire to her

favour, although his inordinate vanity had frequently led him to believe that he had made a lodgment in her affections, — could scarcely prevent himself from mentioning her name and perfections to his master's client.

“ I think that may be done,” he said to Sir Peregrine, “ for we see such things managed every day. Mr. Fairfax has only to put an advertisement in all the principal newspapers, headed ‘ Matrimony,’ and wives will spring up as thick as mushrooms. I know a man who was married in that way : he advertised, saw, accepted, went to church, and was married. and all within a week. Now you know that is doing a great deal, — particularly when a fortune is dependent upon despatch, as it is in your case. Egad ! London is the place after all !”

“ I am not very curious in wives,” said the baronet, without any affectation of indifference : “ all I want is a good legal wife : let her come within the description given in the will, and I require no more.”

Mark could not refrain turning up his eyes

with astonishment at his apathy and indifference ; but when he considered that if once Sir Peregrine became acquainted with Mary's beauty and perfections, such feelings would soon give place to affection ; and being in the main an amiable and well disposed man, his resolution was fixed to propose her to Mr. Fairfax as the baronet's future wife, never once supposing it possible that she might herself repel such good fortune.

Sir Peregrine, having signed and executed all the proper deeds brought by Mark, as well as a power of attorney empowering Mr. Fairfax to act for him in all that regarded the will, began to make preparations for his intended voyage, chartering a ship, loading thereupon his collection of antiquities, and making arrangements for receiving others. Mark had not been unmindful of his friends in England : he bought sundry boxes of figs, of which he requested Sir Peregrine would have the goodness to take charge, at the same time pointing out one direction thereupon affixed as particularly deserving of his care. That direc-

tion was to "Miss Mary Allnutt;" and when he said this, he looked narrowly into the baronet's face to discover perchance whether it might not indicate by look or by suffusion that he had awakened some sympathetic feeling; — but no, the long antique face said nothing, and Mark's heart smote him, lest in giving him to Mary as a husband, she might not have to wed a mummy.

We must now leave these two worthies to shape their different courses;—the baronet, to embark, more full of the ancient dead and their works than of the modern living and his own obligations; whilst Mark Woodcock, bestrode his post-horse, and anticipated at every step the happiness of once again seeing his friends in England, and returning to the joys of Lincoln's-inn.

CHAPTER VII.

Edward Manby's adventures.

THE last we heard of Edward Manby was through a letter written to Uncle Abel from Liverpool, giving some account of Major Allnutt, received from the master of a merchantman just arrived from Vera Cruz. Since the reception of that letter no news had been received of him, to the astonishment of Abel and his sisters, and to the dismay and sorrow of Mary. It will now be our endeavour to give the reason for this silence.

When Edward was called away from London by his uncle the brewer at Liverpool, instead of meeting with cheerful faces and looks of prosperity, it was gradually disclosed

to him that his uncle's affairs were in a bad way, and that he was threatened with bankruptcy : losses which he could not foresee had overwhelmed him, and instead of offering his nephew a share in the concerns of his house, he was obliged to recommend him to seek his fortune in the best manner he could.

At the time Edward wrote the abovementioned letter to Abel, he was not fully aware of the complete ruin which awaited his uncle ; although, by the hint he then threw out, it was evident that all was not right. When afterwards made acquainted with the whole truth, he was overwhelmed with disappointment, because, in addition to his grief for his uncle's misfortune, he felt how abortive were his hopes of shortly being united to Mary. Unwilling that she should partake of this affliction at a time when she and her relations required every support, he remained some time without writing. He was soon roused from his despondent state by hearing from the same master of the merchantman that a vessel was on the point of departure for Mexico, and that its

owner being a friend, he would not only be enabled to give him a passage at a cheap rate, but procure him an excellent situation with one of the mining companies, where young men of activity and intelligence were much in request.

Edward had often thought how desirable it would be for his friends the Allnutts, and particularly for that one object of his thoughts, the lovely Mary, could her father be restored to them. By his activity and knowledge of the world, he would be able to extricate them from their difficulties, which at present appeared hopeless. He had often before turned over in his mind the possibility that he might himself become the means of producing this event, and had determined, should an opportunity offer, he would proceed to Mexico, in order to lay the state of his family before Major Allnutt, and thus induce him to return to England. He might thus also be enabled (and perhaps this was his real motive) to render the Major favourable to his passion for his daughter, and his consent being se-

cured for their union, he felt that every difficulty would be removed. He therefore greeted with delight the offer made to him, and did not lose a moment in consulting with his uncle upon its practicability. Of course his uncle encouraged his wishes, — for, alas! he had nothing better to offer; and thus, before another day passed over his head, he found himself plunged in all the bustle and hurry of instant departure. The vessel was hauled out and lying at single anchor, and he had not a moment to lose. He sat up all night (for she was to sail in the morning) writing a full account of himself and his future plans to his friend Abel. With that stream of religious hope in a good providence which ever flowed through his heart, every expression in his letter breathed resignation and cheerfulness. Whilst he described the ruin which had overtaken his uncle, and consequently the destruction of his own immediate prospects, he dwelt upon the new road of advancement which had opened to him. He trusted in a few years to realise a

small independence; and if so, he entreated that he might be ever remembered as the unalterable friend of the family, and consequently that his means might be looked upon as theirs.

Having finished his letter, there was only one thing left to do, and that admitted of a question;—should he write to Mary and persuade her to inform her relations of their mutual attachment? He felt that no mystery ought to exist, but still the same delicacy which had opposed his making the disclosure existed now as before. He allowed that point to remain unsettled, determining to put the finishing stroke to his letter on board the ship on the following morning. With this resolution he lay down, hoping to snatch a few hours of sleep; but the painful emotions which engaged his mind at a moment so full of anticipation of the future, prevented all rest, and he rose early only to bid a hasty farewell to his uncle and his friends, and to get on board with the utmost haste.

The morning was lowering and tempestuous—the sails were already shivering in the wind, and there was every symptom of immediate departure. Edward's experience in naval matters was small, and he was not aware how nearly the anchor was about being tripped when he stepped on board. He desired the boatman who had conveyed him from the shore to wait a few minutes until he should give him a letter, and went straight into the cabin to close that began to Abel. With pen in hand and paper before him, the image of his beloved came vividly before his imagination. Overpowered by his feelings, full of the miseries of separation, he sought the only relief he could obtain, and determined to pour out his whole heart to her whom he cherished more than life. He wrote as follows:

“I am leaving you, and that by my own act, God alone knows for how long. His holy will be done! and in his hands I deliver up my future fate; but if I do not relieve my feelings by writing to you, I fear that my

heart will sink with utter despondency, and that I shall remain totally unfit for the task I have imposed upon myself. I love you, Mary, with my heart so entirely absorbed in your image—with every feeling as full of the most devoted love, that were not my little paramount to every consideration, I would return to you and never more be separated from the spot which you inhabit. But I am resolved to make myself worthy of you, that I may win your constancy by the excess of my devotion. I have written to your mother the motives which have impelled me to take this step. Oh, may you soon see your father! I cannot write much, for we are almost too late, but I would whisper to you one of the principal wishes of my heart, and may I no longer keep our secret from your relations, for we must have no secrets for them. You will thus be protected from the address of others, and enjoy the satisfaction of referring yourself from all mystery. Adieu! I hear the anchor is up; I hear the vessel cutting through the sea. Dearest Mary, my friend—my beloved.

The morning was lowering and tempestuous—the sails were already shivering in the wind, and there was every symptom of immediate departure. Edward's experience in naval matters was small, and he was not aware how nearly the anchor was about being tripped when he stepped on board. He desired the boatman who had conveyed him from the shore to wait a few minutes until he should give him a letter, and went straight into the cabin to close that began to Abel. With pen in hand and paper before him, the image of his beloved came vividly before his imagination. Overpowered by his feelings, full of the miseries of separation, he sought the only relief he could obtain, and determined to pour out his whole heart to her whom he cherished more than life. He wrote as follows:

“I am leaving you, and that by my own act, God alone knows for how long. His holy will be done! and in his hands I deliver up my future fate; but if I do not relieve my feelings by writing to you, I fear that my

heart will sink with utter despondency, and that I shall remain totally unfit for the task I have imposed upon myself. I leave you, Mary, with my heart so entirely absorbed by your image—with every feeling so full of the most devoted love, that were not my duties paramount to every consideration, I would return to you and never more be separated from the spot which you inhabit. But I am resolved to make myself worthy of you, that I may win your constancy by the excess of my devotion. I have written to your uncle the motives which have impelled me to take this step. Oh, may you soon see your father ! I cannot write much, for we are about to sail ; but I would whisper to you one of the principal wishes of my heart, and say, do not any longer keep our secret from your relations, for we must have no secrets for them. You will thus be protected from the addresses of others, and enjoy the satisfaction of relieving yourself from all mystery. Adieu ! I fear the anchor is up ; I hear the vessel rushing through the sea. Dearest Mary, my adored—my beloved,

adieu ! Even to the world's end, and for ever,
your faithful

“ EDWARD.”

He folded up his letter in all haste, and then ran up on deck to deliver it to the boatman : but what was his dismay, when there, to see the boat already at a considerable distance, and the boatman rowing away apparently without concern ! His first impulse was to roar out to the man with his utmost might to come back, and his next to entreat the captain to stop the speed of his ship. The wind blowing violently — the boatman heard not his voice. The captain said that it was as much as his ship and his situation were worth to back his topsails in such a sea, for now that it was coming on to blow, it was necessary to make all sail from the land : he therefore continued his course. Edward positively wrung his hands in despair : the whole mischief which this circumstance would produce started before his eyes at once ; and he foresaw that his friends would impute to him neg-

ligence and ingratitude, whilst his adored Mary would weep over his inconstancy. He was a little appeased when the captain assured him that they could not fail to fall in with some vessel homeward-bound which would take charge of his letter, and he forthwith began to endite another in order to explain away the delay and disaster which had attended the first; but the surprise and indignation which he felt would naturally be produced by his silence haunted him and did not allow him a moment's repose.

After he had become sufficiently accustomed to ship-board to master the inevitable sea-sickness, day after day did he sit on deck anticipating the appearance of the much-desired vessel; but, as if it were intended that his patience should be tried to the utmost, he was daily disappointed. Every one on board excepting himself seemed satisfied; for the voyage had hitherto been uncommonly prosperous. The same favourable breeze which filled their sails on leaving Liverpool accompanied them across the Atlantic; and the captain and his

crew, (for sailors are apt to be superstitious,) looking upon Edward as the fortunate one who had brought good luck, did not cease hoping that they might not meet the anticipated vessel, lest such an event should bring on a change. The favourable wind actually carried them onwards between Antigua and Guadaloupe, right through the Caribbean Sea, and to the northward of Jamaica, where it ran them into a calm not far from the Isla de Pinos, at the west end of Cuba.

It was here that Edward, who expected nothing but grateful thanks from the captain for his extraordinary passage, was surprised to hear the following exclamation: "D—n it! I would rather give fifty pounds out of my own pocket than this should have happened. This is the very place where poor Jack Hawlaway and all his crew met their death from those infernal Cuba pirates — the whole sea swarms with them." Then lifting up his voice, he roared out to the man at the mast-head, "Keep a good look-out, and let us know when you see anything." All he got for answer was

a drowsy “ Ay, ay, sir ;” whilst the captain’s words struck dismay in the hearts of all who heard him. Edward eagerly inquired into the meaning of what he had heard, when the captain disclosed such a succession of horrors, in describing the lives and actions of pirates, that he succeeded in making Edward’s blood run cold with horror at the atrocities described. First was an account of the Rob Roy from Glasgow, that had been plundered, her whole crew murdered, and the captain made to walk the plank ; then followed a detailed story of what happened to the small American schooner, the Margaret, whose captain having valiantly attempted her defence,—for she was a beautiful craft, though extremely small,—the wretches had tarred and feathered him, and then, with savage jeers, informed him they would teach him the art of flying, and straightway threw him from the yard-arm into the sea. Much was said of a warm, well-built craft called the Harriet, laden with gunpowder, bound for Vera Cruz, which having plundered, the wretches had managed to blow up,

with all on board ; whilst there was no end to the histories of the slave-trade and its horrors, and the thousand evils with which it was attended.

After hearing these and such like stories, Edward was charmed to hear the captain give orders to make preparations in case of attack ; all the firearms were in readiness, the guns shotted, the boarding-netting hoisted, and the cutlasses distributed. The number of seamen on board consisted of fourteen, including the captain, besides Edward Manby. They were all strong, able-bodied men, who did not give way to gasconading or bravado—for a thorough English sailor is seldom a boaster—but they seemed determined to do their duty to the utmost.

As the day drew to a close, the vigilance on board became the greater ; for the first shades of night is the hour at which the sea marauder is most apt to be on the alert for prey. The eyes of all were directed to the verge of the horizon ; and the captain was straining his sight through his spying-glass, when the man at the

mast-head was heard to cry out, "A boat on the starboard bow!"

"What does she look like?" exclaimed the captain.

"A large boat full of men," was the answer.

Immediately every preparation was made, whilst few words were said. The guns were run out, and every one was stationed at his post. The captain, a cool, determined man, went round the deck and addressed his men with encouraging words, whilst he concealed the danger which awaited them. He was particularly attentive to Edward, who by his mild and accommodating conduct had endeared himself to every one on board; and now he was happy to have found one so able to second him both by his advice and gallantry. He exhorted him not to thrust himself into danger, to act coolly, and not to fire his musket without aiming at some definite object. He ordered every open demonstration to be made to show that he was well prepared; whilst he entreated his men to act with prudence, and not to expose themselves unnecessarily.

He made this demonstration upon the principle that rogues are always afraid of honest men, and that the determination of a few is frequently known to appal the illegal combinations of the many: and in this he hoped that he was not mistaken; for suddenly the boat, which was now visible from the deck, stopped rowing, and seemed undecided what course to steer.

This gave the captain a favourable opportunity for taking a steady survey through his glass of the craft and her contents, and he could plainly discern her to be a large row-boat, the masts and sails of which had been purposely lowered to prevent detection. She was full of men, and her appearance sufficiently announced their character and intentions: it was evident that they were nothing more or less than pirates. The point from which they came was extremely suspicious, and their manœuvres were calculated to increase that suspicion.

The captain looked around the horizon with a wistful eye, hoping that ere the awful strug-

gle should take place some friendly sail might heave in sight, or that a breeze of wind might spring up which would enable him to escape from his awkward situation. He knew that both English and American ships of war were cruising about this very spot for the protection of trade : he inwardly prayed (for his agony was great) that some help might be vouchsafed him ; for in his inmost mind he felt that, if attacked, nothing could prevent their being taken ; and that whatever might be his exertions and those of his brave crew, still, that they could do nothing against such overpowering numbers as he observed to be in the piratical boat. He hoped that the delay in their operations might be ominous of good ; but, on making use of his glass a second time, he observed them again in motion steering directly towards him. He loudly exclaimed when he saw this :—" Now, my lads, look out ! Here they come, and will soon be alongside."

CHAPTER VIII.

A conflict with pirates described. Edward Manby's ill luck pursues him.

EDWARD did not remain a quiet spectator. He armed himself with cutlass, pistol, and musket; and in so doing he put up a mental prayer that the disaster which he and his friends on board apprehended might be averted, and that they might be left to pursue their voyage in peace. He did everything to further the orders given by the captain; and showed by his looks and by the few words which escaped him how determined he was to lend every assistance that might be in his power. In the mean while, the piratical boat had advanced within hailing-distance; when

the usual questions having several times been made and no answer returned, the captain ordered one of his guns to be fired directly at the boat. The shot fell at a short distance from it. This excited the invaders to increase their energy; and now might be seen at the helm a commanding figure of fierce aspect, who seemed to be the chief, and who urged on his crew with violent action and cheering words. More guns were fired, and still without effect. Several men in the boat were seen to fall from the effects of musketry, which only redoubled their efforts, and soon they were alongside. Now might be heard voices elevated in every tone and in various languages; and had any one on board the English ship been cool enough to observe, he might have discovered men of all colours and all nations, deserters, outlaws, and murderers, a motley crowd, who usually make up the crews of piratical vessels.

The clamour that ensued as the invaders abandoned their oars and took to their arms

was soon succeeded by the awful sounds of actual conflict, on which depended life or death, and in which were displayed the greatest coolness and determination on one side, with the most ferocious and barbarous exultation proceeding from superior numbers on the other. The clashing of cutlasses, the discharge of fire-arms, the cries of savage fury mixed with the agonies of the wounded, and an occasional heavy splash in the sea announcing the fall of some struggling wretch, were confounded into one general uproar. The result of the struggle at first was very doubtful, but at length it became evident that the superior numbers of the pirates would prevail. They had already succeeded in gaining possession of the deck, and most of the gallant crew were either slain or mortally wounded. Edward, his head bound with a handkerchief, had been fighting manfully hand to hand, and had received many a wound, which he disregarded so long as he could wield his sword. He espied the captain in mortal conflict with the chief of the

pirates; and as he was about rushing to his assistance, he heard the captain exclaim, as he fell, "For Heaven's sake, Mr. Manby, surrender! all is lost."

The piratical chief, on hearing the name of Manby, suddenly turned round, and looking steadily at Edward, seemed overcome by his appearance. He desisted from taking any further share in the conflict, excepting to check the ardour of those of his men who were on the point of adding Edward to the slain. His exertions saved the life of our hero, who, however, to all appearance, was left for dead; for he fainted from loss of blood, and was thrown on one side apparently without life. It was only by the exertions of the chief, who poured some spirits down his throat, that he was again brought to life; but when the reviving youth turned his eyes round and saw the fate that had befallen his companions, he wished that death might have been his fate also.

On all sides the deck was strewn with the

dead and the dying, — some actually dead, others in the last agonies — and others again moaning with piteous accents in all the throes and tortures of pain. The gallant captain was breathing his last, one hand still grasping a cutlass, whilst the other held that of a mess-mate who had just died before him.

To his astonishment, Edward perceived that the chief of the pirates was entirely taken up in tending his safety. When he had come to himself, the chief said to him: “Are you the son of Captain Manby, who, with his wife, died in Jamaica some twenty years ago?” Edward having answered in the affirmative, the other assured him he had nothing to fear, for that he would take care of him; and then, by the help of some of his men, having laid him on a bed in the cabin, and having ordered that no one should molest him, he busied himself in securing the advantages of the prize which he had made.

To the dreadful tragedy just described, which terminated by great loss of lives on the

side of the pirates, and by a massacre of all the English with the exception of Edward, succeeded a scene of general pillage, followed by one of drunkenness and carousing. The nature of man, as existing in the wretches who had committed this deed, was entirely merged in that of the demon. So long as it was necessary to maintain discipline, the chief asserted that character pistol in hand; but when his object was gained, he no longer chose to preserve his superiority, but allowed the most unbounded licence to reign. The deck was now as much strewn with drunkards as with the dead; and in one loathsome simultaneous heap might be seen the wretch who had lost his senses by intoxication, lying side by side with the unfortunate man who had fallen by the sword.

The history of Edward's miraculous escape was briefly this:—The piratical chief had been brought up a boy in the family of Captain and Mrs. Manby, when at Jamaica. He was treated more as their child than their servant;

he had almost seen Edward born—had nursed him as an infant, and, in short, lived in the Manby family until the death of the father and mother, when bad courses and evil company gradually drove him to the desperate profession in which he has now appeared before us. As soon as he heard Edward's name pronounced, struck by his strong likeness to his parents, he was immediately awed into generosity; and as in the heart of the most wicked there is ever a chord which, if properly touched, vibrates to virtue and repentance, so in this instance the ruffian softened into the lamb as soon as he caught a certain look in Edward's face which reminded him of all his charms as a child, and of all his obligations to his parents.

The whole gang were so entirely plunged in beastly excess, that no one remarked a slight breeze which had sprung up, and moreover that it was bringing up with it a gallant vessel under a crowd of canvass. The chief was the first to perceive this most unwelcome appa-

rition ; and immediately, with the assistance of such as were comparatively sober, he began to make all sail. His efforts were useless, for the chasing vessel was an English man-of-war, which had the reputation of outsailing everything on the station.

Danger is an amazing quickener of the senses. So soon as it was known that they were chased by a man-of-war, the drunkards seemed all at once restored to sobriety ; they fell naturally under the discipline of their chief, the decks were cleared, and everything put into order to meet the emergency. It soon became evident that all their efforts would prove useless, for the chase, to use a sailor's phrase, was overhauling them hand over hand. The captain of the pirates then called a council ; and it was resolved to abandon the ship and to take again to their boat, in the hope of being able, by dint of rowing, to gain one of those creeks on the coast so well known to them, and into which no ship of any burthen could enter. Therefore, collecting everything valuable, they

hauled their boat alongside, and with the utmost haste and trepidation entered it. But this their resolution was taken too late: the breeze was freshening, the sea getting up, and the man-of-war was now within gun-shot distance. However, they shoved off, and began rowing for their lives.

The captain of the man-of-war having observed this manœuvre, and having guessed the true state of the case, steered directly after the boat, leaving the ship to itself. The precision with which the shot was thrown from the bow-guns deprived the runaways of that coolness so necessary in danger, and made them pull unsteadily; for they became apprehensive of instant destruction. At length a shot having struck the boat, a cessation of exertion ensued, and with that a determination to surrender. The pirates were taken on board; and as their profession could not be doubted, they were immediately clapped into irons, and it was announced to them that they would forthwith be taken to Jamaica, there to

be tried for their lives before the Court of Admiralty.

All this while, Edward remained confined in his berth, scarcely able to move, but conscious that something had taken place to produce so sudden a cessation of noise and bustle. He lay in this state for some time, when the less boisterous noise of a new set of visitants met his ears ; and soon after, the cabin in which he lay was visited by a youth in uniform, accompanied by several English sailors. He hailed this apparition with gratitude, for it was the signal of his delivery. He soon made himself known to the officer, who seeing a man disfigured by blood and apparently much wounded, incredulous of his story, at once classed him as one belonging to the pirates, and ordered him to be taken on board the man-of-war. This was immediately done ; but when he made known his situation to the captain — gave proofs of his identity by referring to his baggage and papers, and moreover was confronted with his preserver, the chief of the

pirates, who corroborated his statements, he was not only allowed to be set at liberty, but was taken under the special care of the captain, who treated him with the attention of a brother. In a short time Edward was restored to health; and the day he left the doctor's hands was the day he caught a glimpse of his birth-place, where he afterwards landed, with his heart full of gratitude for his preservation from a horrid death.

We will not delay the progress of our story by digressing into that of the unfortunate pirates, who were duly made a proper example of, and, by their execution, paid the debt of their numerous murderous crimes: nor will it be necessary to say, that Edward did everything in his power to comfort and cheer the preserver of his life during the short time he had to live ere he met that doom which by no interest or interference was it possible to avert. The instances of good feeling which the unfortunate man had exhibited, were a sufficient warrant that he possessed other good qualities,

which only required cultivation to create that repentance so necessary to salvation ; and Edward did not fail to labour hard to produce such a result. The poor wretch wept like a child at his exhortations, and quitted life with more composure than he had ever before enjoyed in it.

Edward having been recognised by many of his father's and mother's friends in the island, was received by them with open arms. He remained long enough to show that he was worthy of bearing a name which his parents had rendered respectable ; and the proofs of this were exhibited in the means freely offered him to prosecute the object of his voyage. Having at length been enabled to forward the letters which he had written to Abel and Mary, his mind was relieved from his principal anxiety, and he embarked joyfully for Vera Cruz on board the same man-of-war which brought him to Jamaica. The voyage to that place was short, and he landed with eagerness in order to make every inquiry

concerning the one object of his search—Mary's father. It was not long before he heard him mentioned; and, in truth, as he proceeded up the country, he found his name in every body's mouth; for it was impossible for one so full of energy and activity to remain unnoticed in a country whose characteristic is apathy and indifference.

Edward proceeded to Xalapa, and thence with all despatch to the city of Mexico. He was introduced to many persons who were well acquainted with Mary's father, and from them he learned that, having been disappointed in discovering the mines he was sent out to superintend, he had turned his thoughts to other projects, and proposed to the government many schemes for raising the republic to the highest pinnacle of perfection; and although his plans were not adopted, yet he was heard with patience, and greeted as a well-wisher to the state. Edward was informed that, in consequence of the failure of all his schemes, he had determined to cross

the Pacific to further the interests of civilisation on the other side of the globe, and that he had recently departed for Acapulco. Being assured that he might be overtaken ere he set sail from that port, Edward was not long in making up his mind what to do, and he determined to follow him with all speed. Accordingly, he hired mules, with a conductor; and taking no other baggage than was necessary, he departed, and rested the first night at San Agustin. Here he was shown the very spot where John Allnutt had rested; and had the satisfaction of sleeping in the very bed in which he had slept. At Cuernavaca he was told that he would easily overtake him, for that he had passed by but a few days before. At the sugar-mills at St. Gabriel, the director spoke in high terms of Don Juan, as he called him, who had given him a good hint towards making some improvement in the machinery of his sugar-works: and at Tepecoaquilco, Edward was charmed at seeing his name inscribed with his own hand on the wall of the

kitchen, with the drawing of a tea-kettle, by which he concluded that he had been descanting to his hosts upon the merits of that faithful administrator to an Englishman's comforts. The scratches were so fresh that Edward almost felt as if he were present. At Chilpantzingo Edward actually saw the print of his shoes before the door, and the circumference of his person on the dust of a table upon which he had sat; and he now made so sure of seeing him, that he allowed himself the indulgence of a longer rest, in order to relieve the excess of the fatigue he had undergone. He then pushed on with vigour for Acapulco, and was overwhelmed with joy upon hearing from a traveller going to Mexico, that the ship bound for the Manillas on which Mary's father was to embark was still at anchor in the bay.

A breeze in the mean while had risen, which refreshed the air as he rode into the hot town of Acapulco. He made at once for the house of the merchant to whose care he had been recommended, and the first question

he asked was concerning the object of his journey. The taciturn Spaniard to whom he addressed himself very quietly took him by the arm, and leading him to an open balcony which overlooked the superb bay of the town, and taking a cigar from his mouth, pointing to a ship in full sail just turning a distant headland, he said, "*Alli esta Don Juan Allnutt ;*"—in other words, "There goes John Allnutt."

CHAPTER IX.

*The first dawn of hope occasioned by a common occurrence
in an uncommon case.*

TURNING from the face of dismay which the disappointed Edward made upon seeing the object of his long search sail away, we must leave him for the present to such adventures as the chapter of accidents may have in store for him, and return to the principal object of our story.

We left Abel a prisoner for debt, and his sisters and niece living hard by in a lodging, working for their daily bread. A prison life must ever be one of great sameness; and habit, which has very properly been called second nature, soon renders that bearable which at first appears intolerable. To Abel,

whose mind was always contemplative, and to whom a constant sense of religion had rendered the vicissitudes of life much less startling than they are to the thoughtless, the situation in which he was placed produced but small effect upon the even tenor of his spirits, although it had an evident effect upon his health. His principal objects of solicitude were his sisters and niece; for he was not slow to perceive that they did not possess sufficient fortitude to bear up against their misfortunes.

Bab's usual alacrity had given way to apathy and a mournful silence; Aunt Fanny, abandoning in despair all her pretensions to youth, had dwindled into a downright old woman; whilst Mary, who evidently forced herself to appear cheerful before her uncle, was daily wasting away, pale and wan, the victim of disappointment. So much time had now elapsed since any tidings had been received of Edward, that, although she never could entirely make up her mind to accuse him of falsehood and inconstancy, still his silence did appear to her so reprehensible, that she strove

with all the powers of her mind to forget that such a man existed. With all the inquiries they had been able to make at Liverpool, the utmost extent of the intelligence acquired was, that his uncle had become a bankrupt, and that Edward was gone off to America.

Such constant striving against the warmest and tenderest affections could not fail to produce the direst effects, particularly on one so confiding and so true as the gentle Mary. Her beauty, so symmetrical in form—so full of the exuberance of youth, had fallen away, and she became thin, wasted, and transparent;—her beaming look, which spoke the inward sunshine of the heart, and a cheerfulness of disposition upon which worldly cares had hitherto never obtruded their baleful touch, was supplanted by a sunken eye which looked upon space, by a blanched cheek which announced disease, and by a pensive look which was only varied by deep-drawn sighs and falling tears. Often did she sit for hours poring over the drudgery of work almost mechanical without uttering a word, and only showing that

she was a sentient being by the occasional upheaving of her woe-stricken breast. But when she proceeded to visit her uncle in his prison—to sit with him, to read to him,—upbraiding herself for so much weakness, and for placing so little dependance upon her Maker, she endeavoured to assume a tone of satisfaction; and those wan and sickly features would assume an unnatural mirth, which, alas! only spoke the more bitterly of her misery. When she conversed with her uncle, she received so much consolation from the piety of his conversation, that every worldly evil appeared obliterated; but when, confined to her miserable drudgeries in the smallest and meanest of lodgings, she was condemned day after day to encounter the unceasing moaning and never-ending complaints of her aunts, then her philosophy and resignation would break down, and she made up a third in the calamitous trio.

The usual tone of their conversation as they sat at work was something in this style:—“I think,” said Aunt Bab, “that Mr. Barnes” (the governor of the prison) “ought to allow in

fairness a larger portion of meat to Abel, who is more constant in his attendance in chapel than any other of the prisoners,—for we might then get something additional for ourselves. Abel encourages more men to go to church by his example than all Mr. Barnes's meat."

"Mr. Barnes has no business to be partial," said Aunt Fanny in the same tone of complaint. "He allowed that tall, dirty-looking woman, of the Middlesex Ward, a penny more for her kettle-holder than he did for mine, which was worked with a great deal more care than hers. I think he is apt to be too kind to very tall women."

"If he don't mind," said Bab, sighing and laying her arms on her knees in listless languor, "he'll have a rebellion among the women. They think their twopenny loaves too small as it is, and if it goes on much longer, I shouldn't be surprised if they were to let him know it too."

"What cheats all these prison people are!" said Fanny. "Would you believe it? that horrid woman to whom Mr. Barnes recommend-

ed us to sell our work,—Mrs. Cross they call her,—she only offered me eighteenpence three-farthings for that beautiful handkerchief which Mary finished yesterday. You know it would have sold for ten shillings at least at Mrs. Woodby's bazaar. I think Mr. Barnes has no business to recommend such cheats to us."

"He does not know what women are," said Bab. "I dare say Mr. Barnes means very well; but he knows no more about women than that barber's block over the way. Milliners will get every stitch they can out of the fingers of the poor; and then, when they can't hold a needle any longer, they would make them work with their bare stumps. With all our labour we can scarcely pay our rent. I am sure," she added with a sigh, "I am wasted into a perfect skeleton!"

"And so am I," said Fanny with a corroborative sigh: — "I, too, that was once so plump! It does not signify talking and moaning, we shall never get fat again until Mexico pays her dividends."

"Then we shall never be fat again," answer-

ed Bab, "for that day is gone by. I begin to doubt that such a place as Mexico ever did exist; and I think that the whole has been a hoax of that wretch old Woodby from beginning to end."

"And there is poor dear Abel," said Fanny; "he really makes me quite angry! he is always taking that villain's part, and says he had a right to make the most of his money, whilst we are left to starve. Did you hear what the clergyman said last Sunday in his sermon? 'The rich man who takes advantage of the necessity or the ignorance of the poor, although he may have the laws of man in his favour, will assuredly go with the accursed of God into hell.' I wish old Woodby had heard that!"

"And young Woodby, too," said Bab: "he has to answer for our present miserable state!"

No sooner had these words been uttered, than the noise of wheels (a rare occurrence) was heard in the narrow street, and presently

a concussion, and a cry, and a general bustle. Mary, who had been sitting near her aunts, silent and absorbed in her own thoughts as usual, jumped up and looked out of the window. There she perceived a dray-cart that had caught the wheel of a gentleman's cabriolet and upset it, whilst the horse was kicking violently ; and within she observed a youth in imminent danger of having his brains dashed out. Immediately the two aunts and the niece rushed into the street to endeavour to assist the sufferer ; and when they got there, they found him in the hands of the collected mob, who announced that he was much hurt. The door of the house in which they lived being open and the nearest at hand, he was dragged into it ; and we leave the reader to guess their sensations when they recognised Tom Woodby himself in the agonising youth ! He had received a violent contusion on the head, which was bleeding violently, and was otherwise much wounded.

However horrified the aunts and the niece

might be at having thus stumbled upon the person of all others whom they least wished to see, yet their benevolence was not to be checked even upon such an occasion as this ; and the unworthy object of it was not long in meeting at their hands all the assistance and care which he might have received from those most tenderly attached to him. They laid him in a bed, bound up his wounds, and nursed him with constant care.

As soon as he became conscious of his state, and discovered into whose hands he had fallen, although convinced that he could not be better off go where he might, yet such little delicacy or generosity of feeling did he possess, that he soon concluded that all the care and kindness thus shown him could only proceed from motives of interest. His original object in coming thus far was to discover Mary's place of abode, in the hope that, after having made her and her relations taste the bitterness of want, they would be likely to lower their tone of indignation and come into his terms ; and now that he found

them so very attentive and kind, he was confirmed in his first supposition; and we need not add, that no feeling of gratitude would prevent him from acting upon the baseness of his motives. Although he was not long in feeling better, yet he did not seem in the least inclined to return to his home, but adhered to the quarters into which he had fallen with the most impertinent resolution, notwithstanding the evident inconvenience to which he was putting the owners. At length he acquired so much strength that he could no longer find a pretext for delay; and with acknowledgments on his tongue for the kindness shown him, he went away with a treacherous determination in his heart to take advantage of that kindness in the furtherance of his wicked views.

Aunt Bab was not long in informing Abel of the circumstance which had occurred, and they speculated upon what might have been Tom Woodby's object in paying them a visit. She conceived that he had repented of his conduct and intended to remit his claim, and

thus release Abel from his confinement. Abel argued, if such had been his intention, why did he not declare it? and as he had not done so, he feared that he was still planning views destructive of Mary's happiness.

The doubt was soon after cleared up by a second visit, when the wicked man's intentions were more fully developed, and, under the pretext of offering his thanks for the attentions shown him, he presumed to put forward his former pretensions to Mary's favour. She soon perceived his intentions, and then for the first time in her life she allowed the indignation which arose in her breast to vent itself in words. She upbraided him with being the cause of the miseries which now weighed upon them, with cruelty in enforcing his claims, with duplicity in his conduct to her, with ingratitude in now repaying the kindness which had been shown to him by his endeavours to degrade and ruin her.

Had he possessed one grain of proper feeling, his admiration would have been excited by the burst of virtuous indignation which broke

from her lips, which not only lighted up her expressive features into a blaze of beauty, but brought out all the graces of her person by the energy and earnestness of her action. But his wicked heart was not to be touched by any one generous feeling : on the contrary, the truths which were thrown into his ears by this seductive maiden first excited his hatred, and then increased his determination to continue his persecutions to their utmost extent.

Mary, who had taken the defence of herself and of her relations into her hands,—for Barbara was too much subdued by her miseries, and Fanny too imbecile,—insisted that the scene which had taken place between her and her persecutor should not be disclosed to her uncle. She would not allow the miseries which he endured to be increased by the impotent anger which would arise in his breast ; but she continued day after day to visit him as usual, and endeavoured to control herself so effectually as to make it apparent that nothing had happened in consequence of the catastrophe of Tom's accident.

The aunts and the niece had frequent access to Mr. Barnes, the governor of the prison, who gave them every facility of disposing of their work, and thus relieved them from the pressure of abject want. At his house they received many alleviations of their misery, as much by his conversation as by the use of books which he very kindly lent them to read.

One morning, when Mary and Aunt Barbara had called upon him to ask his advice upon some matter touching Abel's better comfort, Barbara first took up a newspaper which was on the table, and which she was ever glad to read—more to look over the advertisements than to read the news, because she hoped thereby to stumble upon something which might suit their case of want; and on this occasion one of the first things which struck her eye was the following advertisement:—

“MATRIMONY.—*A man of rank and title, of middle age, pleasing person, and possessed of considerable wealth, wishes to unite himself to a young lady of good family, of agreeable person, in the enjoyment of good health, who has*

received a good education, and is in every way a person of good temper and unimpeachable character. Money is of no consequence to him; therefore he requires no fortune from his wife. None but those who can answer to the character here required need attend. Undeniable references will be required. Apply to Mr. Fairfax, solicitor, Lincoln's-inn."

Barbara read this over and over again, her face flushing the while, and her attention so much absorbed, that she had forgotten the errand on which she came. When Mr. Barnes came in, she handed the paper over to Mary, who also was struck by the advertisement, and read it; but she read it without at first remarking how entirely the character and circumstances of the person coincided with herself; and although she felt an oppression at heart as the thought flashed across her mind that she now had an opportunity of liberating her uncle from prison and making him and her aunts happy, still the thought at first was merely transitory, like a passing cloud over a calm lake, and left her in the same mood in which it had found her.

Aunt Bab, who had been amazingly elated by the discovery she had made, had, however, sufficient delicacy not to urge it to Mary, but merely satisfied herself with remarking what a strong coincidence there was between Mary's situation and character with that required in the advertisement. Mary coldly smiled, but said nothing; still the thought returned with fresh vigour to her mind, and at length succeeded in taking such entire possession of it, that she could think of nothing else. She struggled within herself, as one of keen feeling struggles with conscience. She felt that Providence had placed relief within her reach, and that she was bound in duty to seek it: she felt herself called upon to make every sacrifice of her own feelings, — her long-cherished love for another, her own particular views of happiness in married life,—in order to emancipate her relations from their present hopeless state of misery and want. She thought to incur the severest reprehension were she to allow selfishness to interpose, and esteemed herself criminal in rejecting what was a manifestation

of God's good providence in her behalf. On the other hand, she dreaded lest by indulging in such thoughts she might be acting with treachery and infidelity to Edward. His image now stood before her, and appeared to upbraid her for venturing to think of forsaking him. She saw in the husband who thus threw himself before the public, one who could only be the rejected of others,—a coarse, vulgar, and unrefined tyrant; who would taunt her for her poverty, and who, after all, would perhaps not be sufficiently generous to withdraw her uncle from prison, or settle him and her aunts in a situation of respectability.

Thus dragged different ways by such opposite feelings, she became the prey of the most cruel uncertainty, and nothing could be more distressing than her appearance. Sleep fled her eyelids, she could not taste food, and she sat the figure of despondency. Her only refuge lay in prayer. Before the throne of the Almighty she threw herself on her knees, and in long mental prayer, accompanied by agony and a sense of her own unworthi-

ness, she poured out her whole soul in supplications, praying that God's grace might be sent her to direct her steps and soothe her almost frenzied mind. She arose refreshed and comforted, for she saw the path of duty before her, and she resolved to pursue it in spite of every other consideration.

CHAPTER X.

As misfortunes seldom come alone, so is the reverse. Much may be said in favour of what is commonly called a 'turn of luck.'

ONE of the collateral incentives which impelled Mary to think seriously of the aforementioned advertisement, was the dread of Tom Woodby's persecutions. She now felt herself so unprotected—abandoned as she supposed herself to be by Edward—she conceived that by acquiring a husband she would be free from one of her principal miseries.

Had Tom Woodby once more appeared, we make no doubt that she would no longer have hesitated to apply to the advertisement as her last resource. But another circumstance took place, which, coming immediately

at the back of her cogitations, settled her uncertainty, and was the cause of leading on to her future destiny.

Two days after Aunt Barbara and Mary had read the newspaper at Mr. Barnes's, Aunt Fanny, casually looking out of the low window of her apartment into the street, observed a tall figure, which struck her as one she had seen before, looking upwards and downwards—first into one house then into another, evidently seeking out the abode of some one. She saw him inquire at the barber's shop opposite, who, to her astonishment, pointed towards the house in which she lived. This still more drew her attention to the stranger, who, without looking up, straightway rapped.

“Who can he be?” said Fanny. Barbara then peered out of the window; and the moment she caught a glimpse of the head and shoulders of the visitor, she exclaimed, “I declare, here comes Mark Woodcock!” An electrical shock could scarcely have given a stronger sensation to the frames of the three who heard this name. “So it is!” said Fanny

in a tone of delight which had long been foreign to her lips. "So it is!" exclaimed Mary in a tone of calmness and thought.

Their exclamations were scarcely over ere he made his appearance. Mark's joy on seeing them was quite equal to the pleasure which he diffused by his appearance. He was indeed much changed in looks, dress, and manner, since he had left them. Travel had done wonders for him; for it had destroyed many of his national prejudices, and had transformed the London cockney into a man of the world. He now talked with confidence upon what he had seen, and made his hearers stare by the variety of odd names and hard words which he mixed into his discourse. He began by informing them that he had sought their old lodging in Golden-square; but that the actual occupiers knowing nothing of them, he applied to his friend in Silver-street, who informed him where he might seek them, for he had heard of the circumstance which had driven Abel to prison.

He was stopped here by Aunt Bab, whose

indignation having long been pent up within her breast, at length found vent in a flow of passionate words. She was almost choked by the violence of her emotion. She went over the old ground of Woodby's deceit, of the neglect of his wife and family, and the villany of his son's conduct ;—she moaned over their present apparently hopeless situation, of the little likelihood there was of Abel being released from prison, and the apprehension of their being doomed to toil and want without a hope of relief.

Aunt Fanny confirmed every word both by look and occasional affirmation. They appealed to Mark whether they were not privileged to complain, and inquired whether such injustice as that which they had received could ever be paralleled in the history of any private family.

To their surprise and further indignation, the only answer they received was an unfeeling smile, and an apparent indifference, accompanied by certain, to them, incomprehensible shrugs and signs. The words which Mark

used were to this purpose: "Let us hope for the best;—you may do better by and by—things are not so bad as they seem; help generally comes when it is least expected." He then particularly addressed himself to Mary; described to her his travels, and especially his meeting with Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, of whom he gave a very favourable picture, touching lightly upon his eccentricities, but enlarging much upon his virtues. He no longer preserved that silence for which he had formerly contended as a duty in men of his profession, but described the situation in which Sir Peregrine had been placed by his brother's will, dwelt upon the wealth to which he was heir, and finally announced the singular mode which he had adopted of seeking a wife.

Mary had paid but slight attention to the first part of Mark's story, not having perceived what was in truth the drift of his discourse; but when he spoke of advertising for a wife through the newspapers, then she became quite alive to the subject. Mark's

whole soul was engaged in the furtherance of the scheme which he had conceived at Smyrna ; it had travelled with him back to England—it had been the theme of his thoughts and the great object of his expectations. When he found that Mary listened to him with sufficient attention, and when he discovered that she must have seen the advertisement to which he alluded, he then requested to be favoured with a little private conversation with Miss Mary, as he had something of importance to communicate.

Mary's face was in an instant flushed, for she felt that her destinies were about to be fixed, and that she was now called upon to make up her mind upon the one great event of her life. She followed Mark into an adjoining room, to the surprise of her aunts, who wondered what such mystery could mean.

Mark, with as little delay as possible, informed her of the scheme, by which he hoped to secure her a handsome establishment and a good partner for life. He said that no one could answer so entirely to the qualifications

mentioned in the advertisement as herself; and that he was quite certain that Mr. Fairfax, with whom the selection rested, would immediately accept her as the future Lady Oldbourn.

Mary, after a considerable struggle, in which her disgust at such a marriage was only diminished by love of her relations and desire to release her uncle from prison, making a violent effort over her feelings, addressed Mark Woodcock as follows:—“Mr. Mark, you have found me prepared for the proposal which you have been kind enough to make me; for by accident it so happens that I saw the advertisement you allude to. Worn out with the misery of seeing my relations almost dying with want—my dear uncle daily losing his health, I cannot withhold from you that I read that advertisement with considerable emotion, for it seemed almost addressed to myself. I perceived at once, that by making a sacrifice of my own feelings, through God’s good providence I might be the means of releasing my relations from their present state, and giv-

ing them a chance of being restored to their place in society. I had therefore almost made up my mind before you came to present myself as a candidate for the advertiser's favour. After what you have said, I can no longer hesitate ; but before I give my final answer, I must ask you this one question, and upon its result will depend my resolution. Should I accept, will sufficient money be advanced to set my uncle free from prison ; and will a sufficient allowance be made to enable me to support my relations ?”

“ Upon that score,” answered Mark without hesitation, “ make your mind perfectly easy. I will answer for it, that all your wishes on that head will be met with liberality. Sir Peregrine is a generous man, upon whom considerations of money have no weight. Mr. Fairfax, too, you will find quite ready to accede to your demands ; and if after you have seen him matters are settled between you, another forty-eight hours shall not pass over our heads before Mr. Abel will be released from prison, and, top-

gether with your aunts, comfortably accommodated in some good lodging."

Upon hearing these words, Mary's countenance beamed with unusual lustre; her whole frame appeared to have received the infusion of a new feeling, for she felt that she was sacrificing her own happiness in order to redeem her relations from further misery. She seemed to glory in that power of overcoming herself, by which she was enabled to crush her own views, desires, and fondest feelings, in a magnanimous self-devotion to the happiness of others. She merely answered Mark, "Very well, sir; then it is agreed. Pray go and announce this to my aunts, and leave me alone."

Mark, struck with increased admiration at her manner, immediately did as he was bid; and as soon as the door closed, she locked it, then covering her face with her hands, fell upon her knees, whilst her whole frame was convulsed by the violence of her sensations. The satisfaction of an angel's mind beamed in her heart; but the weakness of her nature gave

way before the greatness of the sacrifice she was about to make, and she was dissolved in an agony of tears. She would have prayed, but Edward's image stood before her. "Dear, dear Edward," she exclaimed, "forgive me! Wretched creature that I am! wherefore am I so wretched? May God forgive my ungrateful heart!—let me hold fast to his love and do his almighty bidding!" Then in mental prayer she poured forth ardent supplications for support, entreating that she might reject every temptation to think of herself, and receive strength to persevere in the good work she had begun. Long was she buffeted by her feelings, and long did she remain absorbed in thought, meditating upon the consequences likely to ensue should her determination be productive of its expected results.

In the mean while, Mark returned to the aunts, whom he had left in no pleasant humour at his apparent want of sympathy. They received him with cold and formal civility; and when they asked him what had become of Mary, to their astonishment—to their breath-

less astonishment, he announced, that she had desired him to inform them that she was going to be married.

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Aunt Bab, naturally enough mistaking him as the object of Mary’s choice.

“Well, this is extraordinary!” exclaimed Fanny, equally deceived.

“Yes,” said Mark with the sort of air which might well have been taken for the exultation of an accepted lover,—“Yes, Miss Allnutt has been kind enough to listen to my persuasions, and she has accepted. She desired me to announce to you this piece of intelligence, which, she is persuaded, will make you happy.”

“Humph!” said Bab.

“Well, I declare!” echoed Fanny.

“We little expected this, and that’s the truth of it!” said Bab.

“It has come upon us like thunder!” said Fanny.

“I am afraid that you are not satisfied with her determination,” said Mark; “yet I have

long thought it was the very luckiest thing that could happen to her."

"Indeed!" said Bab with an indignant toss of her head.

"There is no other person that I know," said Mark, "who is worthy of so much happiness."

"Some people, I do think," said Fanny between her teeth, "think mighty well of themselves!"

"I protest," said Mark, "I expected you would appear a little better pleased at the good luck of your niece."

"Good luck indeed!" said Bab.

"Why, half the young ladies in London would give their eyes to stand in her shoes."

"Better and better!" exclaimed Fanny.

"Does not this place her at once at the top of the tree?" said Mark.

"Of what tree?" inquired Bab in disgust.

"Why, I ask," said Mark, "does not she attain rank, wealth, and an unexceptionable husband, at one grasp?"

“We never heard of any wealth before,” said Barbara, a little softened.

“If there is money,” said Fanny, “that alters the case.”

“Wealth, to be sure there is, and rank besides,” said Mark. “I would have made her a duchess had it been in my power, for I am sure she is fit for anything: but surely you won’t object to her becoming a baronet’s lady?”

“A baronet’s lady!” exclaimed Bab in utter astonishment; “how did you ever become a baronet? I thought you were plain Mr. Mark Woodcock, nephew of our Cruikshank. Surely the Turks don’t make baronets?”

“You a baronet!” said Fanny. “Why, you have been made one abroad, then?”

“This is excellent!” roared Mark, breaking out into unrestrained laughter; “such a mistake is worth a farce! Who ever said I was a baronet?—you must be dreaming!” Then turning to Aunt Bab, he said, “Did not you say that you had read the advertisement in the newspaper headed ‘Matrimony,’

and that Miss Mary answered to the person sought after in every respect? Well, that is my advertisement,—or my chief's, Mr. Fairfax, which is the same thing. Sir Peregrine Oldbourn is the man seeking a wife: he has found her in Miss Mary, and she has agreed to become Lady Oldbourn."

As soon as this explanation was made, the joy which broke out in the hearts of the two spinsters is not to be described;—they could not contain their raptures, particularly when Mark further explained, that the preliminary to the whole thing would be the immediate liberation of their brother from prison, and their instalment in some comfortable house, with a suitable maintenance, until the marriage should take place.

They would have covered Mark with the approbation of an embrace, had he not fled to seek Mary, who, he hoped, would now be ready to receive him. They all three went in search of her, the aunts screaming out at the top of their voices the fulness of the joy which had so suddenly overtaken them.

Mary, unwilling that her aunts should know what had been the violence of her struggles, did her best to compose her countenance and to come before them with her usual equanimity ; but Bab and Fanny, who worshipped the ground upon which she trod, were not slow in detecting the traces of recent weeping ; and in embracing her with silent affection, they became themselves more inclined to weep than to give way to noisy mirth. They soon felt how great was the sacrifice she had consented to make ; they were convinced it was made to ensure their happiness, and this consideration gave a fresh tone of tenderness to their manners and attentions towards her. All that Mary said on the occasion was this : — “ My dear aunts, let me entreat of you, do not say a word to Uncle Abel until the whole be settled, and then let me announce it to him. I know him so well, that if he once thought I was doing this to get him out of prison, he would rather die there than allow it.”

CHAPTER XI

A few hints dedicated to the curious in matrimony. The effects of an advertisement.

MARK WOODCOCK returned the next day at an early hour for the purpose of accompanying Mary, escorted by Aunt Bab, to the office of Mr. Fairfax, to whom she was to be introduced, previous to the final settlement.

They found Mr. Fairfax a benevolent-looking man, with a quick eye and business-like manners, seated in a sombre, dusty room, surrounded by a multitude of chocolate-coloured tin boxes, the receptacles of the fortunes of his numerous clients, which, like a tradesman's stock in trade, were displayed with no little ostentation on and about his shelves. Among these the name of Sir Peregrine Oldbourn,

Bart. shone conspicuous ; and well did the family lawyer repay the confidence reposed in his integrity, by the anxious interest which he displayed in furthering to the utmost the wishes of the late baronet.

Aunt Bab, followed by Mary and preceded by Mark, ascended the well-worn staircase leading to the office, and entering the battered door, were introduced into an ante-room, where they perceived several women seated in a row, some gaudily, others more modestly dressed, but all wearing a veil, and all keeping it closely lowered over the face, who evidently were collected in consequence of the advertisement. They might have been taken for the harem of a Mussulman, had a black guardian been at hand to control them.

As soon as Bab and her niece appeared, all the heads were immediately turned towards them, and a severe scrutiny took place, which was concluded by a contemptuous sneer. In truth, the scanty and much-worn garments, the faded colours of their bonnets, and the general pauper-like appearance of both Aunt Bab and

Mary, bespoke anything but persons coming in search of a husband. Bab's squalid looks announced want and hunger; Mary, though pinched with ill health and poverty, still exhibited such forms of beauty, and such modesty of countenance, that even as she stood, it was impossible to see her without admiration; and all eyes, both of the clerks in the office as well as those of the expectant females, were fixed on her face.

“Wait here for a moment,” said Mark, as he proceeded to announce their arrival to his chief; during which interval, Mary and her aunt had time to take a short survey of the assembled competitors. One was a tall, thin, and extravagantly-dressed lady, with ringlets flowing in such profusion, that it was evident they were a recent translation from the barber's block to her own head; and although her face could not be distinguished through her veil, yet there was visible a certain tinge of red, which might make one conclude that she was not so young as she had been. She sat in a languishing, serpentine attitude on her chair,

putting out a foot which by its shape had evidently been the torment of the shoemaker's art. Next to her sat in strong contrast a short squat woman, who, wishing to add to her height, had drawn up the bows of her bonnet into perpendicular lines over her head, making her look like a low-built house with high chimneys. She breathed short and moved her feet, wishing thereby to touch the ground with them as she sat on her chair. There was a resolution in her gait which spoke her determination not to die single.—Then came one who seemed to find her hopes principally upon the attractions of her teeth, for her veil was lowered just sufficiently to exhibit her mouth, which she kept so disposed, that her teeth, which presented a formidable row, might be seen without interruption. Another hoped to gain admiration by the exposure of her arm and hand, which she permitted herself to flourish about in various attitudes. In short, there was no end to the catalogue of pretensions which, in various modes, were put forwards in the hope of obtaining the prize.

Mary and her aunt had not waited long ere Mark invited them to walk into Mr. Fairfax's room, evidently thereby exciting the indignation of the ladies in waiting. Having already been prepared by Mark's description of his visitors, Mr. Fairfax received them with great kindness and civility; and he was not long in ascertaining how accurate that description was: Mary's beauty was not lost upon him, and the charm, simplicity, and truth of her manner, succeeded in making him ready to believe everything that might be advanced in her favour.

There was one thing upon which he insisted ere he gave his final acceptance, in order fully to put into execution the provisions of the late baronet's will; which was, that proper references should be given, who might report upon the respectability of the applicant's character. Upon this Aunt Bab looked at Mary, and Mary looked at her aunt, without knowing what to say, for to whom could they refer in London? At Ivycote, it is true, they had a host of friends; but they could not send Mr.

Fairfax thither: therefore, with the exception of the Goold Woodbys, they were quite at fault. They forthwith mentioned their situation to Mr. Fairfax, who instantly settled that a reference to the Woodbys would be quite sufficient; for he added, whatever might be their hostility, they would never venture to vilify the character of the family; and he determined himself to call upon them that very morning.

Upon this Aunt Bab and her niece, escorted by Mark, left the room. As soon as Mark returned to the ladies in waiting, he announced to them in the civilest of manners, that the object of the advertisement having been accomplished, he was requested by Mr. Fairfax to relieve them from further attendance. This became the signal for the breaking out of that wrath which had been excited in the breasts of the expectants by the precedence accorded to Mary over themselves.

The tall, thin lady, standing up and raising her veil, whereby she disclosed a face that would have done credit to a gorgon, exclaimed,

“ I won’t stir till I have seen Mr. Fairfax, and so you may tell him. I came here first, and you hav’n’t behaved like a gentleman to take in those *ladies* there,” (pointing to Aunt Bab and Mary, making a most contemptuous sneer as she placed a strong emphasis upon that word,) “ before me and the other *ladies* here. I don’t see why the like of them is to take the lead before the like of us.”

“ Yes,” said the squat woman, clenching her hands and showing a face upon which ‘rum, cordials, and rich compounds,’ were written in legible characters,—“ Yes, *ladies* indeed ! I wouldn’t give that,” snapping her fingers at the same time, “ for a whole house full of them ! I should like to know why such a pair of *ladies* are to take the bread out of our mouths ! I wouldn’t demean myself so much as to drink out of the same glass with either of them !”

“ We are scandalously used,” said the third lady, showing her teeth literally and figuratively. “ We have as much right to be seen and heard as that person,” pointing to Mary with much contempt ; “ and we have a right to

know why she is to be preferred to us. I don't think she can *bribe* very high," she added ironically ; "although we suppose that gentleman," pointing to Mark, "can say why he has chosen to show her such special favour."

"Why, ma'am," said Mark with great good humour, "you can't all marry the gentleman : he did not advertise for more than one wife, and having secured that one, he is content. I am sorry that you should be disappointed. But you, ma'am," addressing the gorgon,— "you are young enough and handsome enough to be independent of advertising husbands : therefore, why should you be angry ? And you," addressing the squat lady,— "it is evident that, happen what will, nothing can keep you out of spirits." And then, making his bow to the teeth, he said, "As for you, ma'am,—you can never fear a rival, for in spite of everybody's teeth, yours must ever have the preference."

With these and such like words he succeeded in pacifying them ; and having once cleared the office of their presence, he was able

to devote himself to Mary and her aunts, to whom he gave every assurance that before the next day was over, Abel would be set at liberty, his debts paid, and the family installed in a comfortable house. He took it upon himself to make all these arrangements, and informed them that, as soon as Mr. Fairfax should be returned from Mr. Woodby, he would wait upon them with the proper deed, which being signed by Mary, would bind her to Sir Peregrine Oldbourn as his wife, and secure to her the immediate advantages of that position.

Mr. Fairfax in the course of the morning walked to Baker-street; and inquiring for either Mr. or Mrs. Woodby, was introduced to the latter, who was seated in her drawing-room with her two daughters, together with our old acquaintance Lady Thomson and two gentlemen. Being unknown to them in person, he was received with that suspicion with which people are apt to view a stranger; but when he unfolded the object of

his errand, he was not long in obtaining the most fixed attention to what he had to say.

“I believe,” he said, addressing himself to Mrs. Woodby, “that you are acquainted with Miss Mary Allnutt?”

Upon hearing these preliminary words, every one present listened attentively, and Mrs. Woodby answered, “Yes, sir, I am.”

“May I take the liberty of inquiring of you what may be her general character?”

“Her character?” said Mrs. Woodby in a tone of surprise. “As a governess, do you ask?”

“More likely as a housemaid,” said Lady Thomson, tossing up her nose.

The Miss Woodbys laughed, and said she would make an excellent lady’s maid.

Mr. Fairfax said, “It is for neither of those characters: I merely wish to know her general character for respectability of conduct, temper, and the qualities which constitute what is called an amiable woman.”

“Oh, indeed, as to that,” said Mrs. Woodby,

“I believe the girl is well enough. I know that she belongs to a pair of silly old aunts, who have brought her up so much like a fool that she can’t cry to a goose; and to a poor wretch of an uncle, who borrows money and won’t pay his debts.—But pray,” inquired Mrs. Woodby, “who sent you to make these inquiries? none of the family have been in my service; they lived in our neighbourhood in the country, where they were obliged to sell all they had and leave it, and I know nothing more of them. I really don’t see why I should be called upon to give the girl a character.”

“The truth is,” said Mr. Fairfax, “that a circumstance has occurred which is of consequence to Miss Allnutt’s views in life, in which it became necessary that a reference of this sort should be made; and as she has no friends in London besides you and your family, she ventured to make use of your name.”

“Friends indeed!” exclaimed Mrs. Woodby.

“She is certainly going out as governess,” said Anne Woodby.

“Perhaps she is going on the stage,” said Ellen.

“No, my dear, that can’t be,” remarked Lady Thomson; “what can an actress want with a character?”

“Allow me to say,” said one of the gentlemen starting from his seat and addressing himself to Mr. Fairfax, “that the sort of undefined, and apparently unwilling approval of Miss Allnutt’s character, which you have just heard, is not only an act of injustice to her, but one of reproach to the person who gave it. Miss Allnutt, sir, is as superior to the generality of her sex in the qualities of her mind as she surpasses them in beauty of person. She is as pure as a child, and as full of fortitude as a martyr. She may have heard of vice, but she can only know it by name. She is so little selfish, that, although she has a right to the adoration of mankind, she requires every one to be preferred before her. She does not know what deceit means—she is the very symbol of truth and sincerity. At the same time, every action is so much under the in-

fluence of prudence, that while she is an example of everything that is excellent, she does not allow her superiority to be even guessed at. Happy indeed will be the man who calls her wife ! and happy are those who live under the influence of her charming disposition and endearing manners !”

“ Well, I declare, my lord !” exclaimed Mrs. Woodby as she addressed Lord Demone ; “ who would ever have expected this from you ? Have not you always been the first to laugh at the uncle and aunts, and to call them names ?”

“ But the first to admire the niece,” retorted Lord Demone. “ I repeat again, that she is the most perfect woman I have ever known, or conceived could exist in this wicked world.”

“ When my lord does admire,” said Lady Thomson, with a sarcastic sneer and a toss of the head, “ he does it with a grace peculiar to himself.”

“ I suppose you mean to say, in City language,” said Lord Demone, “ ‘ with a grace beyond the reach of *h’art* :’ but in this case you

are mistaken,—I am perfectly sincere in what I say.”

“That was well put in,” said Simpleton Sharp; “I never thought of that before: that City *h* has done wonders!”

“I am very much obliged to you, my lord,” said Mr. Fairfax, when he had discovered who he was, “for this expression of your opinion—I cannot wish for a more satisfactory character;” and he was rising to take his leave, when Mrs. Woodby, with great importunity of manner, stopped him and said,

“Now you really must tell us who you are, and what has been the purpose of your inquiry—indeed you must; you can’t come putting us to all this trouble without some return—it wouldn’t be fair.”

“My name is Fairfax; I have no need of making a secret of a plain fact,” said the lawyer: “I am solicitor for Sir Peregrine Oldbourn; he is shortly to arrive in England, when he will marry Miss Allnutt, to whom he is to be this day affianced, and she will then become Lady Oldbourn.”

“ Mary Allnutt, Lady Oldbourn !” exclaimed Mrs. Woodby with wonder and mortification in her looks.

“ It can’t be !” said Lady Thomson.

“ Why, she will become the wife of a baronet, and one of the richest of his order,” said Lord Demone with exultation ; “ and she will be the mistress of Oldbourn-hall and of untold wealth.”

“ Whoever thought of this !” said Anne Woodby, as if gross injustice had been done to herself. “ What will Tom say ?”

“ I wonder where Edward Manby can be ?” said Ellen.

“ But how can this happen,” said Mrs. Woodby, with wicked joy in her looks, “ when her uncle is now lying in prison, at the suit of our son Tom, because he can’t repay him a miserable hundred pounds. Surely Sir Peregrine ought to know that : is he aware that these Allnutts are actual paupers, and only fit for the workhouse ?”

“ Your son will this day be paid,” said Fairfax. “ Mr. Abel Allnutt will this day be

liberated from prison, and the poverty and miseries of the family will from this day cease." Having said this with great emphasis and with a tone of exultation, he added with much ceremony, "I have the honour to wish you a very good morning;" upon which, making his bow, he left the house; Lord Demone and his companion soon after following.

"Did you ever hear anything like that girl's luck!" said Mrs. Woodby to Lady Thomson after a long pause.

"I never did," said Lady Thomson: "but I must do myself the justice to say, that I always said she was handsome, although I thought the aunts were poor creatures."

"I always liked Aunt Fanny," said Anne; "and Uncle Abel was ever good-natured to me."

"Old Barbara is a well-meaning creature," said Mrs. Woodby, "although she insists a little too much upon keeping old men and women warm. I suppose we shall have them back at Ivycote."

"I always make it a rule," said Lady Thomson, "never to think ill of any one because

they are poor: I think we had better call upon the Allnutts as soon as we know where they live."

"Now I recollect it," said Anne, "there is a purse which I forgot to finish, and which I will send Mary immediately."

"Do, my dear," said her mother; "and write a note to Barbarossa, and ask her to dine whenever it is agreeable; and inquire particularly after Abel's old cough—do."

CHAPTER XII.

A release from prison. The struggles of virtuous self-denial.

As soon as Mr. Fairfax returned to his office, he commissioned Mark Woodcock to take all the necessary steps for releasing Abel from prison, and for removing him and his family into an appropriate habitation ; but, as a preliminary, to secure Mary's signature to a deed which would bind her to Sir Peregrine Oldbourn as his wife, whensoever he should appear to claim her as such.

Mary was awaiting the arrival of this moment with impatience, dreading lest her resolution should be overturned by the many suggestions of her imagination. She felt strong in the purity of her intentions, and in the conviction of doing right ; but she had to contend

against fearful opposition in her own breast. Edward's image was constantly before her in the attitude of supplication, and Sir Peregrine's as that of an odious tyrant. She longed for Mark's appearance with the document which she was to sign, when the excitement in which she lived might be abated by an irretrievable act; for the fever of indecision is more frequently allayed by a knowledge of the worst than by remaining in a state of doubt.

At length, when Mark really appeared, instead of meeting him, as she intended, with a cheerful countenance and an unflinching hand, the blood left her heart, and she fell into so long and painful a swoon, that her aunts became alarmed for her safety. They hung over her with solicitous affection; whilst Mark, with the deed in one hand and the pen in the other, shook his head and said, "There must be something more in this than meets the eye."

At length, when restored to herself she had swallowed a cordial, seeing Mark in the same attitude, she exclaimed, "For pity's sake, sir, let me sign! Excuse my weakness—let us not

delay a moment !” He placed the parchment before her, gave the pen into her hand ; the proper witnesses were present ; when, after a pause, in which she mentally prayed for support, she signed her name. She then immediately retired to her room, where she passed the rest of the day in constant prayer, which she had learned from the experience of misfortune to be the only effectual means of soothing the mind.

Mark then proceeded to the lodgings of Tom Woodby, whom he condemned to do that which he willingly would have refused,—namely, release his victim from debt, which he did upon receiving the full amount of his demand. We do not wish to detain our readers with an account of the base feelings which arose in the breast of this wicked gentleman when he was informed of the turn affairs had taken ; but it was delightful to Mark to exercise an authority productive of so much good, whilst he excited an impotent rage in one who only practised evil. Leaving him to gulp down his mortification, Mark proceeded to

secure a house in Gower-street—a sort of frontier position on the confines of gentility; which having done, he returned to give an account of his proceedings to his chief, who forthwith authorised him to conduct the whole family to their new habitation.

We have long abstained from noticing Uncle Able, who has undergone at our hands nearly the same neglect that the modest and retiring man does from the world. His life in prison had been one of patient endurance, of humble resignation, and of cheering meditation upon the promises of Christianity. Such a being, totally divested as he was of every exterior attraction, is most likely to pass through the world unnoticed; and excepting in the possession of that sunshine of the breast which exceeds all price, and with which he was specially blessed, he could boast of no possession which insures what is commonly called enjoyment.

In the prison, his only recreation was the conversation of his sisters and niece, who devoted as much of their time to him as they could abstract from the necessity of gaining a liveli-

hood; and at this precise moment, owing to the events we have described, he had been more than usually deprived of their society. This had surprised him, and he had become anxious to see them; when, on the morning after all the arrangements were made, he perceived Mark, accompanied by both his sisters and his niece, at the wicket, begging permission to see him. This circumstance struck him at once as foreboding something new; and as soon as Mark exhibited the order for his freedom, his mind was so confused by a variety of emotions, that it was long before he could give utterance in words to the gratitude which beamed in his heart.

Unwilling in the face of the prisoners to describe the circumstances which led to his release, (for he was still ignorant of Mary's intended marriage,) his sisters exhorted him to lose no time in accompanying them to the house prepared for their reception; and he left his late miserable dwelling with the same equanimity which he had preserved on entering it, though not without a mental thanksgiving for

so unexpected a mercy. When he found himself at liberty — restored to the open street, leaving the prison-gates behind him, he felt a renovation which was productive of buoyant spirits, and contributed to restore that strength which had been much impaired by confinement. During their progress in the hackney-coach, he became anxious to know the reason of this change ; but he was not allowed to be fully informed until he reached his new home. He perceived by Mary's melancholy look and thoughtful manner, that something must have taken place which involved her happiness ; but far was he from contemplating the possibility of her marriage.

At length they reached the abode in question prepared for them. It was one of those houses in which everything smelt new, in which every inch of mahogany was polished up to mirror point, and where every chair was fixed to its place with mathematical precision. Words cannot convey the delight of Aunts Bab and Fanny, nor the feeling of gratitude which Abel felt, at such a restoration to the world's comforts after

their recent life of toil, pain, and privation. Mary's dejected mind was cheated out of its misery by the pleasure she felt at seeing her relations happy, and by the secret satisfaction of feeling that she was the cause of the change; and she would have been happy herself, but for a secret bodement, which made her dread lest the beautiful picture now before her eyes should contain a hideous reverse, which she felt would sooner or later be exhibited to her.

Abel being still to be satisfied as to the cause of this hitherto mysterious change, Mary, who had undertaken to disclose it, taking him into a separate room, seated herself by him, and straightway informed him of every circumstance relating to the engagement she had formed. Abel looked her steadily in the face, and whilst his heart dilated with gratitude at the knowledge that it was to her alone he was indebted for his present well-being; still her looks told him, that however great his happiness might be, hers was not without alloy. She endeavoured

to conceal her real feelings; but he was too quick-sighted not to discover that she was playing a part: for whilst an artificial smile shone on her face, her breast heaved with unfeigned sighs. She made use of every innocent artifice to induce her uncle to believe that what she had done was not so utterly hateful to her as he might have supposed: but still he was not satisfied, and cross-questioned her so pertinaciously, that at length she fairly burst into tears, avowing that his doubts were in part true, but entreating him to question her no further. She made him aware that what she had done was not now to be undone; that she had bound herself by a formal deed to perform certain duties, in consequence of which she had received and was receiving certain benefits; and therefore it was no longer time to discuss whether she had done well or ill—by her act she must abide; and, with God's assistance, she hoped that she would be able to conduct herself without reproach in the new situation in which she was about to be placed.

Abel, seeing how much she was in earnest, no longer persisted in ascertaining the secret feelings of her heart : but their interview had scarcely ceased, before a circumstance took place, which effectually brought to light what poor Mary had so anxiously endeavoured to conceal.

Mark Woodcock, perplexed at not having received any tidings of Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, (although from the nature of the man he might have expected as much,) had applied at the post-office, hoping to discover some letter wrongly directed from him ; but instead of a letter addressed to himself or to Mr. Fairfax, in the dead-letter office he found one addressed to Abel, which from the variety of scrawls over it, showing the various places it had visited in search of its owner, announced that it had lain long unclaimed. Mark did not delay a moment in taking it to Abel, little conscious of the mischief he was about to produce. Abel, after looking at it for some time, at length exclaimed, "From Edward Manby, I declare !" Mary's countenance fell as she heard

these words, and the colour forsook her cheeks. Barbara and Fanny were also present.

“My dear Mary,” said her uncle, “here is a letter for you also inclosed.” As he handed it over to her, he did not perceive how much her hand shook, nor how deadly a paleness overcast her features. She went to a distance to hide her emotion, and opening the letter with trepidation, read those warm and overflowing effusions with which the reader is already acquainted, written by Edward Manby on his departure from Liverpool. Her eyes could not second her desire to read the whole letter, for, suffused by rising tears, they but half performed their office; and with the letter half read, she hastily tottered out of the room with the intention of shutting herself up in her bed-room.

She had scarcely closed the door, ere the noise of a heavy fall was heard on the staircase. Barbara, Fanny, and Abel rushed out with one accord to see what had happened; when, to their horror, they discovered

their too sensitive niece in a deep swoon, with her head resting on the balusters, lying her whole length on the ground, and blood flowing from a wound she had received in falling. In a state bordering upon madness, they raised her up, and straightway deposited her in bed. Abel picked up the letter which had fallen from her hand; and judging that its contents must have caused her present seizure, he hastily glanced his eye over it, and there he discovered what he had long suspected—how much she and Edward were attached to each other. His sisters were also soon made acquainted with this circumstance; and then, and not till then, did the whole mystery of her despondent state break upon their minds.

“My God!” exclaimed Abel; “and has she indeed sacrificed herself for us! Let me return to prison, and there let me die rather than that this dear—this noble creature should thus suffer! I will immediately proceed to seek Mr. Fairfax, and lay the whole of this sad story

before him, and see whether it would not be possible to annul the engagement into which she has involved herself."

Barbara and Fanny shook their heads, not knowing what to say ; but they insisted upon the necessity of sending for a physician, who, as soon as he saw his patient, pronounced her to be in a high state of fever. This melancholy intelligence put every other thought out of their heads for the present, and they all three united their utmost exertions to tend her with the most unremitting attention. That long restraint which she had laboured to place upon her feelings—that uncertainty in which she had lived concerning Edward—those fearful apprehensions that she was preparing a hopeless state of wretchedness for him as well as for herself,—all conspired to bring on this crisis, and the brain, from the bewildering variety of intense emotions which at the moment of the reception of the letter assailed it, became inflamed and soon announced its derangement. It was piteous to behold one so young, so beautiful, and so innocent, struggling with insanity !

That form and those features, so full of grace and gentleness, were now torn by the throes and contortions of madness. But perhaps it was still more piteous to observe the despair — the absorbing despair of the woe-stricken relations. They fell at once from the height of the greatest prosperity to the depths of the greatest misery. Abel's habitual resignation gave way before the deep depression of his spirits, and he bemoaned himself at those sad inflictions which had led to Mary's present state; he could with difficulty restrain himself from venting aloud the bitterness of his anguish. Aunt Barbara, aided by the zeal of old Betty, was the only one of the three who had sufficient presence of mind and power of action to perform the duties of a nurse, and to see that the prescriptions of the physician were properly administered; for poor Fanny, as inefficient in adversity as she was wont to be frivolous in the sunshine of prosperity, was utterly helpless.

Various were the turns which the disorder took. Sometimes the name of Edward would

come to her lips, when she would hold imaginary conversations with him, and cry and laugh by turns; then she would imagine herself to be governor of a prison, and order all the prison-doors to be thrown open and the prisoners set at liberty. Afterwards she raved with every appearance of fury at some fancied injustice, and immediately after relapsed into the most womanish and endearing fondness for some imaginary benefit; but Edward's image was the most frequent on her mind, and she constantly appeared to screen him from some impending evil.

It would be in vain to describe all the vagaries and wanderings of a disordered brain—that strange piece of mechanism by which man holds his privileges as a reasonable being; but it will be sufficient to say, that in the case of poor Mary, that organ having been thoroughly ransacked by every diversity of aberration, at length showed symptoms of giving way to the skill of the physician, who, when he felt the uncertain, fluttering pulse, smiled as he foretold an approaching prostration of strength,

which he asserted would mark the abatement of the fever. Abel at this intelligence awoke from despondency, and restored to his sense of a superintending providence, retreated to his own room to pour forth prayers for her recovery.

From the moment of her falling into an almost inanimate state, the doctor, calculating upon the power of a youthful and a hitherto unimpaired constitution, announced her speedy convalescence, provided she was kept perfectly quiet and protected from all exciting causes. And he was not mistaken. Day after day her mind gradually though slowly was restored to itself; — her perceptions became correct — her observations showed that the crisis was over, and that she was restored to the world of reasonable beings. The first word she uttered which had the appearance of consciousness was heard by the faithful old Betty, who in her joy exclaimed, “Bless her little heart, she has just said, ‘Oh!’”

“Has she?” said Aunt Bab; “let me run and tell Abel.—“ The dear creature has just

said, ‘ Oh !’ Come, come !” she exclaimed to her brother, who, with outstretched hands and a face full of rapture, followed his sister to the bedside, and there to his delight he heard the scarcely audible voice of his beloved Mary saying, “ Dear Uncle Abel !”

From that moment she began to mend ; and the unremitting attentions and care with which her uncle and aunts watched over her, were gradually repaid by the delight of seeing her restored to life after they had given up every hope.

CHAPTER XIII.

*Abel Allnutt's disinterestedness. He wishes to return
to his prison.*

ABEL and his sisters, whilst they tended their niece during her convalescence, were extremely careful in following the doctor's directions never to advert in the slightest degree to the cause that had brought on her illness. Neither the name of Edward, nor that of Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, nor even that of her father, were pronounced before her ; but she was aware that Mark Woodcock never passed a day without making inquiries.

One morning, after Mark's visit had been announced, and when allusion was made to the goodness of his heart, and to the various good qualities which he possessed, Abel and Barbara

being present, Mary of her own accord, and in a collected and firm manner, said: "My dear uncle and aunt, I fear that I have caused you considerable trouble and uneasiness. I have betrayed great weakness — that I know; but, thank God! let us hope that it is now all over. I have prayed earnestly for more strength of mind, and I feel that my prayers are heard. We may now talk with safety upon my future views and my future duties, for I am conscious that I dare meet them with courage."

Abel and his sister looked at each other in dismay, fearing the consequences of such a communication,—for Mary was still extremely feeble, — and the former instantly evaded the conversation she would have led to, by saying it would be time when she was quite restored to resume the subject; but up to this moment, the doctor had only enjoined one precaution, and that was quiet, — constant, unbroken quiet!

Mary would have continued; but both Abel and her aunt positively refusing to hear her, she was obliged to submit to their wishes, and

she endeavoured to divert her mind with less exciting subjects. But this hint of the state of her mind made Abel determine immediately to put his original intention into execution, of annulling Mary's engagement with Sir Peregrine Oldbourn. To this effect, he sought the first opportunity of locking himself up with Mark, in order to consult with him upon the fittest steps to take. He began by expatiating upon the excellency of Mary's character—a subject upon which he would never cease to talk, and asserted that it was entirely and solely in order to release him from prison, and to place him and his sisters in a comfortable position, that she had applied to Mr. Fairfax;—that in doing this she had committed the greatest violence upon her own feelings; for it was now plain—and it was a discovery they had only made at the moment of illness—that her affections were fixed upon another man. Who that was, he said it was not his intention to disclose, out of delicacy to all parties; but he was certain that if this engagement with Sir Peregrine Oldbourn

were allowed to exist, so strong, as it had been proved, were her affections, that it would be the source of lasting misery and mischief to all concerned. He therefore entreated him to reflect how the engagement might be annulled.

Mark, who was one of the best-natured, although one of the vainest of men, had never quite made up his mind, ever since he had known Mary, and particularly since the scene which had taken place at the signature of the deed, whether or not he was the individual upon whom she had set her affections. This excess of vanity (and how often does it not play the same trick to its ridiculous votaries!) entirely made him overlook Edward Manby, whom he but slightly knew, although of whom he had heard much, and thus his vanity made him conclude that he was himself the object of Mary's love.

There he was, seated opposite the anxious Abel, looking uncommonly pathetic as a swain, but very official and business-like as an attorney's clerk. Called upon to give an opinion upon a point of law, he sunk his finer

feelings for the moment, and having cleared his voice, he said, that he of course could affirm nothing positive as long as he had a superior to whom he must appeal: but this he must say, that the question was full of perplexity; that deeds were difficult things to set aside when they involved penalties; and that although Mr. Fairfax might be very well inclined to do anything to give pleasure to Miss Mary or her friends, still, acting as executor to a will, he had but one course to pursue, namely, to put the testator's wishes into effect. These, however, he asserted, were only opinions of his own, which, as they might be put aside by those of Mr. Fairfax, he recommended Abel immediately to seek that gentleman in person, and he avowed himself ready to accompany him there.

Abel without further reflection acceded to Mark's offer, and soon he was in the presence of the solicitor. When Mr. Fairfax had heard Abel's story, he confirmed Mark's opinion, adding, that annulling the deed to which Mark was a party, putting aside the heavy

penalty to which she was subject, was a matter of considerable and even vital consequence to his client; for should a proper wife not have been provided for him at the moment of his arrival—an event which now might be expected to take place at any moment, it might involve the loss of the whole of the Oldbourn estate. He, Mr. Fairfax, therefore, acting as executor and trustee, and as the friend of Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, must first consult his interests before he could listen to Abel's proposal. Then, putting on a smile, he said: "But, after all, Mr. Allnutt, are you consulting your niece's real interests in thus endeavouring to destroy a most advantageous match — one which ensures her handsome settlements and a brilliant position, besides the possession of a very amiable man, which Sir Peregrine assuredly is?—and are you not merely lending yourself to a girlish whim? for, in truth, it seems that she answered our advertisement entirely of her own accord, and she therefore could not have been very deeply smitten with the person in question."

Abel assured Mr. Fairfax that the step which he had now taken was entirely unknown to her ; and although aware that he should be obliged perhaps to return to prison, yet he would much rather incur that penalty than run any risk of endangering his niece's existence. Mr. Fairfax in answer gave him but little hopes of acceding to his wishes, and hinted that the utmost he could expect might be from an appeal to Sir Peregrine in person ; for should he arrive within a few days, then time enough might still be left to seek another wife.

With this answer, Abel returned whence he came, deeply cogitating upon the chances which might prevent Mary from becoming the wife of Sir Peregrine. Ere he reached the house, he perceived a very fine carriage standing at the door ; and when he entered the drawing-room, to his great surprise he found Lady Thomson and Mrs. Goold Woodby and her two daughters seated in grand array before Aunts Barbara and Fanny.

As soon as he appeared, to his confusion the

visitors all rose from their seats, and with a warmth of congratulation which he had never before witnessed, rushed towards him and overpowered him with fine speeches concerning Mary's future prospects.

"We have thought it our duty," said Lady Thomson, "to congratulate you on this happy occasion. We have heard of Mary's good luck with the sincerest satisfaction; and it is a duty I owe to myself to say, that I never heard of anything in my life which gave me greater pleasure."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Goold Woodby, having tried to thrust in her speech during Lady Thomson's effusion, "we came off the moment we heard it. It would have been shameful in us, such old friends too, not to come and give you joy. Believe me, we were not slow in putting in a good word, when Mr. Fairfax came to ask us about character and all that sort of thing; and we are quite delighted to find that it has turned out so well. I declare I am quite as happy as if it had happened to one of

my own girls, for Mary has always been a great favourite of mine."

"Although her prospects look brilliant," said Abel, shaking his head, "yet in truth she would have been happier, and so should we all, had she remained as she was."

"This you can't say from your heart," replied Lady Thomson: "for does she not acquire wealth, rank, and title; and, let me ask you, would you deprive her of them? I can tell you a title is not so easily obtained nowadays. I owe it to myself to say, that my late Sir Peter had the promise of a baronetcy before he died; and although, as far as sound goes, one ladyship is as good as another; yet I'm not too proud to own, that a knight's lady is as little to be compared to a baronet's, as a cotton gown is to a satin one. No, no, don't think to make me believe you don't wish your niece to be a baronet's lady."

"And, although she will get her title by an advertisement," said Mrs. Woodby, "yet who is to know that? She will be as good

a lady as the best of them. And, though she is going to marry a man she has never seen, who may be as old as the hills and as ugly as sin for what she knows, yet, what will that signify after the first fortnight. She will be mighty happy, I dare say, and well she deserves it too. I always said Mary was a nice, dear girl, and fit to sit at the head of any table."

Aunts Bab and Fanny, who at the first announcement of their visitors were taken quite aback by an honour so little expected, scarcely knew how to look; but their hearts were too full of the milk of human kindness to know how to be repulsive, and they could no more bear malice than they could condescend to commit an act of meanness: they therefore received them with their usual frankness of manner. Softened by the tone of adulation which their visitors adopted, they humbled themselves the more they were exalted.

"You are very kind to think so well of our poor Mary," said Aunt Bab; "I fear a high

rank would never suit the lowliness of her mind."

"La!" said Mrs. Woodby, "how can you talk so? I declare Miss Mary is fit to be a queen, she is so superior:—she is almost as tall as our Anne, and a great deal broader across the shoulders than Ellen there, who is a poor thing after all."

"Indeed," said Anne Woodby, "she's much taller than I am: and when she is her ladyship, will be far taller and far handsomer than any person we know; although we do know Lady Thorofield, who is a peeress, besides Lady Thomson, and several other ladies."

"Ah, she is a sweet creature, and that's the truth of it!" said Lady Thomson.

"Yes, so dignified, and will look the thing well!" said Mrs. Woodby.

"Remarkably well in feathers!" said Anne.

"With her hair parted," said Ellen.

"Sir Peregrine is a happy man to have got such a wife!" said Lady Thomson.

“ We don’t know what sort of a looking man Sir Peregrine is,” said Fanny ; “ except that he has a long face and looks like a wild Oriental, as Mark Woodcock says.”

“ You may be certain that an old baronet, as he is,” said Lady Thomson, “ must look well. My Sir Peter, who was only a knight, was always reckoned like George the First.”

“ Sir Peregrine, I hear, is not so old as that comes to,” said Mrs. Woodby. “ Mr. Woodby is only a bit past fifty, and we haven’t a thought of calling him old yet, although one side of his head is grey and the other grizzle ; — besides, the calves of his legs now are as good as ever.”

“ A man may be an old baronet,” said Lady Thomson in a tone of superiority, “ although he may be a young man. The Baronetage will settle that question.”

“ I see,” said Mrs. Woodby, “ you were talking of his creation, when I was talking of his real years, which, I believe, are more than Mary’s by a score, sweet creature !”

“ If minds are congenial,” said Abel, “ age

does not signify so very much as the world generally imagines."

"The high principles which you possess," said Lady Thomson to Abel, "would make you contented under all circumstances. I wonder you do not take to the church, now that you have such a powerful nephew, who has — so I hear — several rich livings to give away."

"If our Tom now had a turn for the church," said Mrs. Woodby, "he would have had a good chance. Perhaps you may make a bishop of Edward Manby, who is a friend of yours, I know, though we have not seen him for many a long day; and then he might marry Ellen there."

"I don't like the church," said Ellen, without a blush, (for the world had long driven such amiable telltales from her cheeks :) "I hate a man who always dresses in black and must always be good."

"Your're a fool for your pains!" said her mother. "What signifies a man's black coat, when he can give you two thousand a year,

your coach, and everything handsome? That's what your fine gentlemen with gold lace and long spurs can't do, let them strain ever so hard."

The conversation continued in this wise for some time longer, when it concluded, on the part of the Woodbys, by protestations of friendship, of devotion, of a desire to renew former intimacy; and on the part of the Allnutts, with simple thanks and expressions of good-will. The visitors would have repaired to Mary's bed-room to nurse her, had they been allowed: Anne offered herself to sit up all night with her,—Ellen to read to her,—Mrs. Woodby to mix up her medicines;—they then promised to return the next day, to drive out Aunt Bab and Fanny; invited them to dine, and, in short, so loaded them with caresses, that the adulation was even too excessive for the simple-hearted spinsters to overlook. When they were fairly out of the house, Bab exclaimed, "Did any one ever see the like of that! What can have made them love us so much all of a sudden?"

“I think,” said Fanny, “they might as well have begged pardon for Tom’s behaviour.”

“Let us hope,” said Abel, “they will ever find us ready to pardon whatever may have been his or any other man’s ill-conduct. I am ready to forgive him; if he as easily can forgive himself, it will be well.—But let us think no more of that; our endeavours must now be directed towards Mary’s future well-being.” He then gave an account of his interview with Mr. Fairfax, and described the endeavours he had made to annul Mary’s engagement.

“What!” said Bab, “would you send yourself back to prison again, and us to beg our bread!”

“Then what will the Woodbys say!” said Fanny; “and Lady Thomson too? they won’t come inviting us to dine and drive any more—we shall be worse off than ever.”

“Let them say and do what they like,” said Abel with spirit; “let the world go its own pace, we have no business with it. Our business is to do our duty, and not allow selfish motives to prevent us from redeeming our dear

noble-hearted Mary from a life of misery. The days of our youth are gone by ; her life is still to come. Shall we, in repugnance to all her feelings, and in direct opposition to a virtuous and well-grounded affection which she has conceived for one in every way worthy of her,—shall we allow her to sacrifice herself for our advantage ?”

“ But, my dear Abel,” said Bab, “ does it not stand to reason,” (taking up her old characteristic phrase, which she had lost in her misfortunes,) “ that if Mary was to see you once more in prison, your health declining, and we paupers and beggars, relying upon the bounty of others,—does it not stand to reason that she would be infinitely more wretched than if allowed to work out the schemes he herself has set on foot, although it does involve the sacrifice of her own best affections ? Believe me, she has strength of mind sufficient to meet such a sacrifice ; her recent illness was owing to the violent state of excitement in which she had lately lived, keeping that secret which had she revealed would have given ease and freedom to

her thoughts, and relief to her heart. Now, all being cleared up, her mind will gain strength, and she will be cheered by the delightful consciousness that she is doing good to those she most loves in this world."

Fanny applauded this speech both by words and looks, for she always submitted to the superiority of her sister's common sense. Abel, too, felt the force of her words; but still he would have been happier were he allowed to be the sufferer instead of his adored niece. He concluded the conference by saying, that things at present must remain as they are, for Mr. Fairfax had asserted that he could alter nothing, and that the matter now rested entirely with Sir Peregrine Oldbourn.

CHAPTER XIV.

A series of adventures portending ill luck, end in good fortune.

EDWARD MANBY'S failure in overtaking John Allnutt at Acapulco was followed up by a succession of misfortunes which ultimately drove him back to England.

Having watched the vanishing of the ship behind a distant headland, he sat down in despair, for at once he perceived it was out of the question to overtake the object of his search. Once launched into the Pacific, with a fair wind driving the ship from the coast, by what possibility could he hope to find him? He therefore submitted to his disappointment with the best temper he could, and soon after turned his steps towards the

city of Mexico. There he sought employment in the service of one of the mining companies, and had succeeded in securing that object at Rio del Monte, when an accident occurred which prevented his immediately taking advantage of it.

Walking through the streets of Mexico, ignorant of the manners and superstition of the people, he met the procession of the Host, bound to the house of a dying man about to receive the extreme unction. The custom on such occasions is for every one to take off his hat and kneel until the coach in which the holy wafer is carried has passed. He did neither, but stood looking on with his hands behind his back, stopping the while near the shop of a shoemaker. Suddenly he heard certain shouts, and observed the faces of all present excited into rage, totally ignorant that he was the object of the commotion; and, before he was aware of the danger, he felt himself roughly seized by the collar, receiving the stab of a sharp instrument in the side at the same moment. He staggered and fell, and

looking round, perceived a ferocious-looking fellow brandishing the bloody awl in his hand, with which he had committed the deed. This was the shoemaker, a fanatic, who, having seen Edward's attitude, which he took for contumely, darted forwards with zealous fury to avenge the cause of his religion.

The wounded man might have remained there and bled to death for what the bystanders cared, had he not been rescued by one of his countrymen, who, acquainted with the language and the people, immediately conveyed him to a place of safety, treated him with kindness, and straightway informed the English minister of the circumstance. Having thus laid the foundation for a warm discussion upon international law between the diplomatist and the government to which he was accredited, the kind stranger continued his attentions, and was rewarded by seeing his friend convalescent, before it was decided whether the shoemaker ought to be punished, or what degree of atonement was necessary to appease the

anger of a government for such an outrageous attack upon one of its subjects.

Edward having recovered, though still weak from his wound, determined to proceed to Rio del Monte; but not taking proper precautions against the intense heat, he received a *coup de soleil*, as it is called, on his journey thither. This brought on more bleeding and more violent discipline, which, added to his first disaster, nearly brought him to death's door, and unfitted him for the duties he had to perform. Moreover, when at his post, an insurrection took place among the miners, fomented by evil-intentioned priests, and soon a report was rife that all heretics had tails. To this fable Edward had nearly fallen a sacrifice; for, taking a ride one day for his health, and rising in his stirrups, as Englishmen are wont to do on a trot, he was nearly stoned to death by a mob of miners, who swore he was giving himself this trouble in order to favour the tail which he wore secreted behind his coat. He was so entirely disgusted by such treatment,

that to remain longer among so worthless a people he felt was time thrown away, particularly as nothing seemed to prosper with him, and therefore he resolved upon returning to England.

Being kindly furnished with money by the preserver of his life, who did not cease taking interest in his fate, he associated himself with a party of six proceeding to Vera Cruz, and with them hired one of those large, ancient-looking coaches, hung upon leathern upholders, and drawn by a whole regiment of mules,—conveyances so well known to every Mexican traveller,—and soon after bade adieu to the capital of New Spain.

Much apprehension was excited at the time as to the safety of the roads. Bands of robbers infested the whole country, and particularly in the direction of Puebla; and everything was said to dissuade the party from attempting the journey, but in vain. On an appointed day, they departed, well armed, and full of hope that no disaster would occur. Passing one of the pine-wood forests, so fre-

quent on the road, suddenly they heard several shots fired, and then cries ordering the postilions to stop and dismount. The most active within the coach seized their arms and jumped out. Edward, still very weak, was fumbling for his pistols, when a discharge of small arms, as if from a battalion of infantry, was directed against the body of the carriage, and he found himself beset by shot-holes, one ball having passed through his hat. Two of those who left the carriage were severely wounded, and two killed outright. All resistance was vain, and those left alive were too happy to submit to their fate and be robbed of all they possessed. This done, the gang withdrew from the field under the orders of their chief, the Captain Rolando of the day, and then left the unfortunate sufferers to make the best of their way.

At length they managed to reach Vera Cruz; and Edward, with joy and thankfulness, once more found himself treading the deck of an English ship. Much as he was persecuted by ill-luck on shore, so equally was

he the favourite of Fortune at sea ; for, escaping the dangers of yellow fever both at Vera Cruz and the Havannah, and being favoured in his passage through the Florida stream, he made one of the most rapid voyages across the Atlantic almost ever known ; landing at Liverpool, safe and sound, quite restored to health, though with scarcely a shirt to his back, or a sixpence in his pocket.

Edward had lived with the image of Mary constantly before him — all his schemes were planned with her happiness in view, and there was nothing he undertook which was not directly or indirectly connected with the hope of one day possessing her as a wife. When he reached Liverpool his heart was full of apprehension, and he dreaded to think what changes might have taken place during his absence. On landing, his first inquiries were concerning his uncle : he found that he had left the place, ruined and a bankrupt, and that his family was dispersed. His next care was to seek some friend who would furnish him with sufficient money to take him to London ;

and having secured a supply, he hastened to seek the object of all his thoughts. Upon his arrival, he straightway bent his steps to Golden-square, hoping to find Mary and her relations in the same place where he had left them. His heart beat audibly as he rapped at the door. It was opened by a strange face ; and in answer to his inquiries he was informed that no Allnutt lived there, and that the name was not even known. With disappointment in his heart, he next directed his steps to the bankers', where he felt certain of learning their address ; but there too he was disappointed, — he was informed that their account had been closed for some time past ; and Edward himself knew enough of Mexican affairs to be certain that their expectations concerning the dividends of the loan were still unaccomplished. He applied at the Post-office in vain—they were not householders, their name did not appear in any of the directories ; and from Abel's habits he was quite sure that he could not be the member of a club. A thought struck him : he remembered that they were acquainted with Mark

Woodcock; but where was Mark Woodcock to be found? He entered a coffee-house, hoping that in looking over a newspaper, with its numerous advertisements, to alight upon some article which might enlighten his mind. He seized upon a large sheet as broad and as long as a table-cloth; and after much tossing and tumbling, to his great surprise, nearly the first thing which caught his eye was his own name, in large characters: it headed an advertisement thus expressed:—

“EDWARD MANBY. — *If a person of that name, son of the late Captain Manby of Jamaica, will call at the office of Mr. Fairfax, solicitor, Lincoln's-inn, he will hear of something to his advantage.*”

“Can that possibly mean me?” said Edward. “It must be; and still, who can have anything to say to my advantage, wretched out-cast that I am?” He read the advertisement over and over again with feelings we will not attempt to describe, until he felt persuaded that he was the person designated; and although tired and jaded with his previous walk,

he set off again joyfully and full of buoyant hope that Fortune had at length determined to turn over a new leaf in his favour.

When he reached Mr. Fairfax's office, he was fairly out of breath with haste: but collecting all his thoughts ere he ventured to announce himself, he entered the office. The first person he saw was Mark Woodcock; and again his heart was cheered by the sight of an acquaintance, who he felt could inform him of the only one thing he really wished to know.

Mark, seeing one of no very prepossessing appearance,—for Edward wore the same dress in which he had left Mexico,—looked at him as one with whom he might have associated in his own journey, and began to consider in what outlandish tongue he ought to address him, when the other stepping up to him said, “Sir, my name is Edward Manby.”

“Is it indeed!” said Mark, heartily glad to hear the confession, and, without another word, dragged him before Mr. Fairfax, announcing his visiter with great emphasis. Mr. Fairfax, eyeing him well from head to foot, and making

a succession of questions to ascertain his identity, to all of which he gave satisfactory answers, at length said, "I am very happy, Mr. Manby, to take you by the hand. I have repeatedly inserted advertisements in the newspapers similar to the one which you have read, but to no purpose. They were put in, in consequence of a clause in the will of your late uncle, Sir Roger Oldbourn, who was very anxious to have seen you before he died, by which act he has bequeathed you the sum of five hundred pounds free of all duty. That sum, as his executor, I shall now have the pleasure of paying into your hands; and I wish it were double the amount. Here is a copy of the will, which you will have the goodness to look over, and here is the money in a cheque on my banker." Upon which the solicitor put the document before him, and the draft for the money into his hands.

Edward stood like one entranced. He had heard, in early life, that he was nephew to a baronet of the name of Oldbourn; but so little was he impressed with the importance of

such a relationship, that it never occurred to him it could be available as a matter of interest. This uncle had always been described to him as so entirely his enemy, that he scarcely could believe in his good fortune. He did not give himself the trouble to look at the will, but taking Mr. Fairfax's word, pocketed the money with as many expressions of gratitude as if the solicitor had given it to him from his own purse. He was bursting with impatience all this while to make inquiries concerning the Allnutts, and as soon as he had an opportunity, eagerly asked Mark whether he could give him any information concerning them, and what was their address?

To this, Mark, and Mr. Fairfax both, answered in general terms that they were well, and would no doubt be happy to see him; but being now entirely engrossed in the affair of the marriage, and daily expecting the arrival of Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, they inquired of Edward whether perchance he could give any account of his uncle, who was hourly expected to arrive from his eastern travels. Again

Edward was surprised, for he avowed that he was not aware of possessing such an uncle, and made eager inquiries how he might become acquainted with him.

This gave Mark an opportunity for making a display of his knowledge of foreign countries. "Sir," said Mark, "you will become acquainted with a most learned gentleman: I know him well,—I knew him in that part of Greece called Asia Minor, where he had just arrived after making that famous discovery of Solomon's Temple at a place called Persepolis in Persia."

"At Persepolis?" said Edward; "I always thought Solomon's Temple had been built at Jerusalem."

"So every one thought until now," said Mark, "and you are right in thinking so; but since you left England all that sort of thing has been changed—Sir Peregrine has settled it beyond a doubt that it was built at Persepolis, and he'll tell you so when you see him."

"I hope soon to see him. But pray," said Edward, more anxious to know where the

Allnutts lived than where Solomon's Temple was built,—“pray, where can I call upon the Allnutts?”

“Oh,” said Mark, “I forgot—here is Mr. Abel's card.” He would have said more, and proceeded to give an account of the present state of the family, but that he could not take that liberty under the immediate eye of his chief; he therefore restricted himself to saying, that he hoped to see him often, as Mr. Fairfax would have much business to transact with his uncle; and having received an invitation to dine with Mr. Fairfax on the following day, he left that good man's house elated with joy, burning to throw himself at the feet of his beloved Mary, and anxious once more to identify himself and his fortune with the only persons that he really loved in the world.

CHAPTER XV.

Illustration of the saying, "Les absens ont toujours tort."

ABEL and his sisters had persevered in not allowing the least agitation to impede Mary's progress towards recovery ; and they were well repaid for their care by the pleasure of seeing her restored to them, still very weak, but pronounced by the doctor quite convalescent. They made the day when she was to leave her bed-room an event of great rejoicing. An arm-chair was placed for her at the corner of the fire-place in the drawing-room, a curtain was drawn to screen her from draughts, and her aunts were all bustle and preparation. When she appeared, languid and pale, though beaming with a beauty almost transparent with

delicacy, her uncle conducted her to her seat, his eyes swimming with tears, and his heart full of gratitude for the enjoyment of a blessing which he at one time thought had been lost to them for ever. They hung over her with the tenderest attention, and seating themselves around, gazed at her with rapture, scarcely daring to draw breath, lest by so doing they might discompose her nerves. Mary felt an inward satisfaction which she could only express by affectionate smiles, which seemed to say, that could she remain thus tranquil and thus surrounded for the rest of her days, she would ask no other boon from Heaven. But, alas ! how short-lived are our pleasures ! Scarcely were they seated, when a hurried knock was heard at the street-door.

“ Who can that be ? ” said Fanny.

“ We must let nobody in, ” said Bab.

“ Not even Mark ? ” said Abel.

“ Oh, yes ! ” said Mary, “ let poor Mark in ; I am sure I am strong enough to see him. He is such a good-hearted creature—pray let us have him in ! ”

Abel was just turning towards the door to give his orders, when two or three rapid bounds were heard on the staircase, the door was violently thrown open, and to their surprise and dismay Edward Manby stood before them. Such a sight at so unprepared a moment may be better imagined than described, and indeed its effects were most disastrous. Poor Mary entirely lost all sensation; whilst her aunts, in utter dismay, their arms extended against Edward, rushed to receive her drooping head. Abel, with quick apprehension of the mischief about to happen, immediately took Edward by the arm and led him out of the room. Edward opposed with violence the urgent action of Abel, seeing the object of his dearest affections so overcome; but the words of Abel, who said, "Edward, you will kill her if you persist," produced so instantaneous an effect, that he followed his conductor into the dining-room more dead than alive.

"What has happened?" said Edward: "in the name of Heaven, what can all this mean?"

“My dear friend,” said Abel, taking his hand with the warmest affections, whilst tears filled his eyes—“my dear Edward, excuse the reception you have met with; but you will forgive us when you know all. We are much to be pitied—that poor girl in particular; she has been dangerously ill, and the sudden sight of you has been too much for her. Excuse my anxiety; I must return to her for a moment; perhaps her seizure is only momentary; wait here till I come again, and then I will tell you all.” Upon which he hastened back to the drawing-room, whilst Edward remained below in all the agony of suspense, cursing his own imprudence for having ventured so thoughtlessly and so abruptly to intrude himself without due notice. He stood with ears erect, awake to the least sound; and we need not describe his feelings, when he heard an order given to the servant to run for the doctor instantly. He would have flown himself—he would have run half the world over could he have done any good; but fearing by some second act of im-

prudence to produce more mischief, he condemned himself to pace the floor of the dining-room until Abel should return.

In the mean while, the endeavours of the aunts to restore their niece succeeded, and they were overjoyed to see her open her eyes and hear her speak, although they found it necessary to take her to her bed again. She had fainted from quick revulsion, produced by sudden emotion ; but as her mind was turned to coming events by constant reflection and daily preparation, and as she was not borne down by fever, the attack was merely one produced by weakness. As soon as she came to herself, they did not permit her to speak, although she was eager to ask all sorts of questions ; and she allowed herself to be quieted, when informed by Abel that he would undertake to explain to the unfortunate Edward the real state of the whole case.

When Abel returned into the dining-room, Edward flew towards him, accusing himself of every sort of imprudence for so thoughtlessly venturing to enter the house without being announced ; but when he was assured by Abel

that Mary was better, he allowed himself to be pacified. Then Abel, taking him affectionately by the hand, said, "Now sit down. I have much to say — much that will afflict you, for I am acquainted with your love for Mary ; and it grieves me to be obliged to tell you, that you must prepare yourself for the bitterest of disappointments."

"O Heaven !" exclaimed Edward, scarcely able to utter from emotion, "what is it ?—tell me quickly. Is she married ?"

"Have patience, my dear friend," said Abel, —"you must know all from the beginning, or otherwise you will not be sufficiently able to pity and forgive her and us. In the first place then, to answer your question, she is not married, but I will not answer for what is likely to take place—she is engaged to another."

"It can't be," said Edward, starting with violent emotion, — "it must not be ; she has engaged herself to me — she never can have changed ! I am come to claim her as my own !"

"You must listen with patience," said Abel.

“When you have heard our pitiful tale, to what necessities we have been reduced, and what sacrifices this noble girl has made, it will then be time to draw your conclusions; and, if I have not mistaken your character, I am sure you will be the first to applaud the magnanimity of her conduct, although it may be at the expense of your own happiness.”

Edward sat himself down in a dogged attitude, as if prepared to undergo some act of torture; when Abel proceeded with his narrative. Beginning from the time of Edward's departure, he laid great stress upon the miseries they endured in consequence of not hearing from him, and avowed that they allowed suspicions of his neglect to creep into their minds, until they received his letter, and all became fatally clear. When he described Tom Woodby's conduct, Edward muttered between his teeth “The villain!” and when from that, having glanced at the dreadful state of want to which they were reduced, which had first turned Mary's thoughts to the advertisement, Abel

seized hold of Edward's hand, and said, "Such, my friend, was our position, and such the motives which urged the conduct of Mary."

Edward did not require more explanation, for his heart was already excited into the highest glow of admiration of her conduct,—he abhorred the pitiful selfishness that could have angered him at the determination she had taken, and he loudly asserted that it would have been contrary to the noble disinterestedness of her nature had she acted otherwise. "But who is the man, after all," said Edward, "that is to possess her? Is he known?—will he be kind to her—has she any chance of happiness with him?"

"Who?" said Abel. "What! have you not been told? Why, it is no less a person than your own uncle, Sir Peregrine Oldbourn!"

Edward's astonishment at this strange coincidence could only be expressed by exclamations of surprise; and however great might be his own disappointment—however bitter his anguish at this destruction of all his hopes, still

there was some consolation for him to find that she was to be married to a gentleman, and one so likely to treat his wife with kindness.

Having heard Abel's statement, he abruptly departed, so anxious was he to be alone, in order, if possible, to regain possession of his equanimity. It was no easy matter to break down in an instant that structure of hope, and anticipated delight, which had so long existed in his heart, upon foundations so deep, that he conceived nothing could ever demolish them. He walked away sorrowful and almost broken-hearted. He longed once more to see Mary, were it only to assure her, that although it had been ordained she was not to be his wife, yet he would live in the hope of seeing her happy: and as a first step to secure that result, he would leave England for ever; for he felt he had not strength of mind sufficient to behold her with indifference in the possession of another. After such cogitations, he determined to return once again to Abel, to make him the confidant of his feelings, and with him to concert to what mode of life, as an

alien from England, he could best turn his views.

When, after Edward's sudden apparition, Mary had come to herself, she soon regained possession of her mind, although her body was too weak to sustain violent emotions. Having anticipated this event, she had schooled herself to meet it; and would have done so with success, had Edward behaved with common prudence in announcing his arrival. Trusting to the excellence and nobleness of his nature, she subsequently determined to see him, to confide in him, to speak to him the language of friendship,—to explain to him that she had built her whole conduct upon the certainty of finding in him that same abnegation of self which she had endeavoured to acquire. Feeling strong enough to execute this resolution, she informed her aunts and uncle that she was determined to see Edward, for she was certain that was the only mode of accelerating her total recovery. They became alarmed, and said that they must refer to the doctor, who alone could judge whether she ought to be

allowed such a licence. The doctor, who happened to be a philosopher as well as one skilled in bodily infirmities, immediately assented to her wish ; for he knew that the only way to produce health of body is by first securing ease of mind.

When Edward called again, Abel informed him that Mary wished to see him ; warning him of her feeble state, and hinting how necessary it was to arm himself with resolution to suppress emotions which would naturally arise upon seeing her again face to face. Although Edward was not quite prepared for this, still joy sprang into his heart at the very idea, and he assured Abel that he would master his feelings to the utmost of his power.

Mary lay extended on a sofa, pale, languid, and weak, though armed in her inmost mind with the resolution of a martyr. It was indeed a trial almost superhuman for a man in love to approach the idol of his heart in the manner that Edward was about to do, and, at the same time, to be precluded from the power of giving full vent to his feelings. When he entered the

room, a clammy moisture broke out upon his forehead, and he would have clutched his own heart, could he have got at it, in order to enclose its emotions within his grasp. He approached her with a faltering step, and seized her hand, which she held out to him, whilst a smile broke out upon her features which would have spoken volumes had she ventured to give utterance to the real sentiments of her breast. Nothing was said between them until Mary broke the silence, and said, "Edward, we are still friends, although our lot has not been cast as we had once intended. We are both blessed with a sense of religion, which, with the help of God, will make us fulfil the duties assigned to us in our different paths through life."

"You must support me, Mary," said Edward; "for in truth I have not yet had time enough to wean myself from—" he would have said his love; but he stopped short, and turning his head away allowed his tears to flow.

"The trial is a great one," said Mary, "believe me; I have gone through its various agonies. My wretchedness has brought me

to the brink of the grave ; and were it not for those dear relations so precious to us both, I would have wished that it might have been allowed to receive me. But why are we here but to be tried ? I have been restored to life, but I have been taught that it is not given to us mortals to make up our own scheme of happiness according to our own views—but our destinies are in other and better hands ! Edward, I have been taught that those delightful visions of happiness which I had once formed of living in your company for the rest of my life must be driven from my mind, and that I am to belong to another—to one whom I have never yet seen,—to one who will probably be the one great trial of my existence—whose tastes, perhaps, are totally different from mine—who may treat me with indifference—who marries me only to fulfil a clause in a will—and one, in short, who will make me daily feel the necessity of fleeing to God as my refuge, as my only resource against despair. Edward, the decrees of Providence must be obeyed—I have in all humility bowed down my head to them ; and I

have said to myself, 'Happen what may, I will strive to be contented with my lot!' I am to promise to love, honour, and obey my husband that is to be; and as I hope for salvation," said the animated maid, "I will exert all the powers of my existence to love, honour, and obey him. I will pray day and night for support: I will go straight forward to my duties, and will with God's help exert my best energies to pursue with credit and honour the path that is spread before me."

Animated with what she said, she rose from her seat, and in an attitude of supplication she said, "And thus, dear Edward, do I pray you to take the same resolutions. Look upon your present situation as one of trial; pray for support; whatever may be your position in life, resolve to perform its duties with unwearied perseverance, and the same result which has crowned my endeavours will crown yours, and we shall mutually enjoy that peace which the world cannot give, and which passeth all understanding."

During this effort which Mary made over

her weakness, Edward gazed upon her with a feeling composed of love, respect, and admiration, for she appeared to him as something more than human. His heart bent with entire submission to her wishes, and with the determination to imitate her example, he said with enthusiasm, "I will endeavour to render myself worthy of you, Mary. The same strength which has been given to you will doubtless be my portion also if I earnestly strive to attain it."

He did not allow himself to remain with her after this declaration, but almost fled from the fascinating influence of her presence, fearful that his weakness might get the better of his nobler resolves. She hid her face with her hands lest a look from him might have overpowered her resolution ; but when she saw him leave the room, the oppression of her heart found relief in a copious flood of tears, until they were checked by that appeal to Heaven in prayer, which always produced the effect of bringing peace to her mind, and restoring her to the conviction that all is for the best.

CHAPTER XVI.

Delusion, infatuation, and hobby-horse riding, are nearly synonymous.

WE return to Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, who, shortly after Mark Woodcock's departure from Smyrna, having hired a vessel and embarked his collection of antiquities, sailed away from that magnificent gulf, infinitely more intent upon his antiquarian pursuits than upon acquiring possession of the fortune that was awaiting him in England. The episode of Mark's visit had made but a transient impression, and surrounded as he was by objects and places, which constantly revived his classic recollections, he allowed them to engross his thoughts more than the common-place business of every-day life. One of his earliest wishes

had been to obtain possession of a certain altar in the Island of Delos, which he had seen portrayed in Tournefort's Travels, and to that spot he first bent his course. He reached it in due time; although during the passage he could not refrain from touching at Chios, to see the place where Homer formerly held his school,—for the inhabitants still pretend to show the very spot on which he sat,—and could scarcely be restrained, in spite of wind and weather, from landing on every island to inspect every stone sacred to an antiquary's eye.

Before his bark cast anchor at Delos, he perceived an English frigate in the offing, and without waiting to discover what she might be, he instantly went on shore, so anxious was he to see the object which had so long engaged his attention. At a small distance from the landing-place he perceived a party of English sailors hooting and making merry at some object at which they were casting stones.

“Go it, Ned!” said one voice.

“Now for a broadside!” said another.

“There goes her fin!” said a third.

“Here’s for her stern!” roared a fourth.

Sir Peregrine hastened to the scene of action; and there, to his surprise, his joy, and dismay, he discovered a most beautiful female statue of white marble, at which the idle sons of Neptune were directing the whole of their energies.

“For Heaven’s sake, stop!” roared the anxious antiquary, running towards the statue and screening it with his body. “I’ll give you anything you like, but throw no more stones.”

The sailors, seeing so strange a figure before them, and hearing him speak their language, at once desisted; although they very probably would not have given up their sport, had not the midshipman in charge of the boat stepped up and rescued the beautiful statue from further demolition.

“They have broken off its hand,” said Sir Peregrine, almost crying with sorrow; and then he fell to making such extraordinary contortions, indicating delight of the highest order, that all the worthies present concluded they had fallen in with one of insane mind. “A

first-rate Venus, by all that 's sacred !" he cried out with rapture as he stood gazing at the prize.

"Please your honour," said a rough fellow, stepping up and touching his hat, "the Venus is only a sloop of war."

"Stand back, sir," said the midshipman, making way for the captain of the frigate, who had just returned from taking a walk through the island, and who, having taken a long look at Sir Peregrine, still too much engrossed to observe what was going on around him, rushed up to him with extended hands, and at once announced himself as an old schoolfellow. The excited baronet could scarcely refrain from throwing himself into his arms with joy, although perhaps this ebullition proceeded more from the delight of having found an old statue than an old friend ; and the result of this meeting proved highly satisfactory, inasmuch as it was the means of putting Sir Peregrine in possession of the statue, for which he was too happy to remunerate all the parties concerned with more than the liberality of ardent passion.

The precious object was conveyed on board his own vessel, and was placed in a spot open to his contemplation at all hours of the day. He entirely forgot his brother's will, his future wife, time elapsed or time to come, and everything that related to his obligations and engagements, in the ecstasies of antiquarian enjoyment ; his Venus was all in all to him. He immediately began writing a dissertation, upholding her as something infinitely superior to the Medici Venus, or, indeed, to any piece of sculpture in the known world. He even forgot his dearly-beloved altar, which in fact had been carried away by a previous amateur : his mind seemed to have been swept of every other sensation or recollection, Persepolis not excepted, and he only lived in the joy and happiness of being the possessor of that which was to give him fame and pleasure for the rest of his days.

He proceeded onwards to Athens and cast anchor in the harbour of the Piræus. No antiquary could ever have been more blest with success and advantages of every kind, were he not oppressed by the weight of his overhanging

engagement. When he saw the wonders of ancient art spread before him, he was lost in delight and astonishment, and he would willingly have passed the remainder of his days in worshipping at the shrine of Minerva ; but as he dozed away his life day after day, lost in admiration, and living more among the ancient dead than among the things of the present time, every now and then a vision of Mark Woodcock would arise before him with a parchment in one hand and a wife in the other, and awaken him from his antiquarian trance.

He increased his collections all in his power, by purchasing fragments of every description. Doric capitals, shafts of columns, huge specimens from Pentelicus, friezes, metopes, and architectural remains, were loaded upon his bark, until she began to swim deep in the water, when the master informed him that she could bear no more with safety. His time for departure now drew near, and he was about paying his last visit to the great fane, when stepping on board, he was informed that his ship had sprung a leak, owing, it was said,

to the awkward loading of certain heavy blocks. He returned ashore; and as he stood on the margin of the Piræus, to his great dismay, he gradually perceived his floating treasures sinking inch by inch into the sea, until the hull of the vessel entirely disappeared from above the surface. The leak had become uncontrollable, and the vessel sunk in spite of every effort. He rubbed his eyes at the phenomenon, and danced about with unavailing supplications for help. His philosophy was not proof against such an event, and he cursed himself as the unluckiest of mortals, and his ship as the worst of ships. What could he do but rave?—At length, when the captain of his bark could with safety approach him, he informed him that, having sunk in shallow water, it would not be difficult with proper help to raise, repair, and make her sea-worthy, but that such an operation could not be done in a day.

Sir Peregrine exclaimed, “I will stay here for ever rather than lose my Venus;” and so saying, he ordered every exertion to be made

in furtherance of the captain's suggestions. Long indeed was the labour, and deeply did the time which it occupied trench upon the prescribed limits of his absence from England: he thought little of his wife and fortune, but gave himself up entirely to the hope of regaining possession of his treasures. To his delight, his extravagant joy, he had the satisfaction one morning, after immense exertions, to see his beloved Venus raised from the deep, uninjured, intact, lovely and attractive as ever: his transports knew no bounds, and he gave an entertainment to celebrate her reappearance. Little by little his whole collection was again restored, his ship repaired and fitted for sea; but so much time had now elapsed, that it was evident, unless favoured by the winds, it would be difficult to reach England within the six months.

He anchored at Malta after a short and prosperous voyage, and would have proceeded immediately to England, had he not, by great ill-luck, met with a party of French travellers, bound on a tour of science and antiquity to Greece and the islands, to whom he could not

refrain from exhibiting with pride and exultation the beautiful statue of which he had become the possessor. The principal person among the Frenchmen was an antiquary, learned in Greek, and one who had written many dissertations. Sir Peregrine had announced his statue as an undoubted Venus; but when it came before the eye of the Frenchman, he looked at it with the doubting aspect of a connoisseur, and after a short interval exclaimed, "Ah, bah! this is no Venus — this is Latona." Upon which issue was joined between the parties: Sir Peregrine felt himself bound to defend the position he had taken up, the Frenchman would allow of no appeal from his decision. The enthusiastic baronet, in the ecstasy of his admiration, determined to prove that his statue could only be the very identical *chef-d'œuvre* of Praxiteles, the famous Venus of Cnidus, which, with a body of stone, had melted a heart of flesh and blood, and quoted every author from Hesiod to Payne Knight to prove his assertion.

The Frenchman begged leave to inquire what

business could Venus have at Delos? "Send her to Cyprus, to Cythera, to Cnidus, to Sicyon, and a hundred other places, and welcome," said he, "but do not let her come to Delos—that island sacred only to Apollo and Diana, and to their mother Latona, whose beauty and agony this statue represents."

"Agony!" exclaimed Sir Peregrine: "on the contrary, I submit it to every one who knows anything of a face, whether the expression of her countenance does not denote pleasure and joy."

Thence ensued a long argument upon the expressions of the human countenance. "But see," said the Frenchman, "here is a proof that it is Latona!—here on the pedestal is something like the wing of a bird. Now Latona was changed into a quail; therefore this must be that goddess."

"I do not admit that as any proof," said Sir Peregrine; "for Venus was the protectress of doves, swans, and sparrows."

Arguments were thus arrayed on either side, until the whole island became divided into

two parties. Sir Peregrine went about canvassing with as much zeal for his Venus as any candidate would for a metropolitan borough ; whilst the Frenchman deemed the honour and glory of his country concerned that he should make good his claims in favour of Latona.

Sir Peregrine was sitting down seriously to publish his views upon the subject in a pamphlet, when the arrival of a packet with newspapers put him in mind that there was such a place in the world as England, and that he had a great deal to do in it ; so, without further delay, he packed up his Venus and his dissertations, and without saying a word, or taking leave of any one, he embarked and sailed away, leaving the field in full possession of the enemy, who took care to have it well understood, that with whatever weapons, whether the pen or the sword, France could not fail to cover herself with glory.

The baronet, full of the subject which occupied his mind at Malta, had leisure on his passage to Gibraltar to arrange his thoughts into the shape of a learned essay,

which he intended to publish the moment he should reach England; and thus did he lose sight of that fortune and all its alluring concomitants, which to any person but himself would probably have kept his mind in a ferment of impatience and anxiety.

The time was drawing nigh when the term fixed in his brother's will would elapse, and still he was in the middle of the ocean thinking upon Venus. Having passed Gibraltar, he got into the Bay of Biscay, where, as usual, he encountered a gale of wind, which came on with a violence that put all his speculations for the present out of his head and made him think seriously upon the safety of his treasures. His vessel was deeply laden, and she laboured much, to the great dismay of all on board, who were aware that the only method of lightening her was to throw overboard a great part of her heavy cargo; but who was there bold enough to suggest this expedient to the doting and enthusiastic antiquary?

At length the storm increased so much, and the vessel was so constantly overwhelmed with

waves, that the master took courage and ventured to speak to Sir Peregrine. He sidled up towards him as he stood on the deck gazing at the storm, and prefaced what he had to say with the preliminary observation, that it was dirty weather, and likely to come on to blow. He stood by for a while to observe what effect such observations would have, when Sir Peregrine remarked, "Why, sir, how much more would you have it blow?"

"We can't go on much longer," said the master, "without lightening the vessel. She won't rise to it at all: something must go overboard, or we shall go down."

"Sir," said the baronet, "I don't understand you. What is to go overboard?"

"Some of the cargo, if you please, sir," answered the master.

"What!" exclaimed Sir Peregrine, "would you throw the works of Phidias into the deep? — would you throw any part of the Temple of Minerva into the Bay of Biscay? There is sacrilege in the very thought! Are you aware, sir, that you are the carrier of treasures

— of part of the works of the most celebrated people of antiquity, whose skill, taste, and knowledge in the arts have never been rivalled, and who exercise influence over all the nations of the present day? If you were to throw any of my blocks of marble overboard, they are lost to the world for ever, and I should like to know how you could ever replace them?”

“As for that,” said the master, “I would get you as much stone as you like from Portland, a great deal better than what we have got on board; and there is no end to the granite one can get from Aberdeen.”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed the indignant antiquary, “did you ever hear of Phidias working with Aberdeen granite? I tell you again, if you throw any of my marbles overboard, you may as well throw me after them.”

The master walked away grumbling, muttering between his teeth that he would not risk his life and that of his crew for a parcel of old rubbish, and actually was beginning to get the gear up for hoisting some of the bulkier fragments from the hold, when, to his joy, he

beheld a break in the sky to windward which portended fine weather, and he straightway returned to Sir Peregrine to inform him of his hopes. The event proved as he anticipated — the storm subsided, and ere a few days had elapsed, the cheering cry was heard from the mast-head of “Land on the larboard bow!” On the following morning, the vessel was abreast of Scilly, running up Channel with a fair wind; and having made her passage good as far as Dover, she hove-to off that port for a pilot.

Here the reader might suppose that Sir Peregrine, considering how much he had at stake, would straightway have landed, ordered a post-chaise and galloped off to London; but no, — nothing could separate him from his statue; but a very short time was left ere the prescribed six months would expire, and still he continued on ship-board, subject to the uncertainty attending winds and tides, determined never to abandon that which he cherished more than life until it was deposited in a place of safety.

CHAPTER XVII.

One of the three great miseries of life, according to the Italian proverb, is, "Aspettare e non venire."

THE time was now so nearly accomplished when Sir Peregrine was due, that all the parties interested in that event began to be seriously apprehensive that some accident had befallen him.

Mary, ever since her interview with Edward, had not intermitted strengthening her mind by religion and reflection, in readiness to meet her future partner in life. Her aunts lived in a constant state of fidget, vibrating betwixt expectation and apprehension; and Uncle Abel's philosophy was not proof against the fear and uncertainty attendant upon an event in which the happiness of his precious niece was so much

compromised. Mr. Fairfax was considering what steps he could take to secure the arrival of his client, for he began to be seriously apprehensive that his eccentricities might defeat his late brother's schemes in his favour ; and Edward was kept in suspense as to the line of life he should adopt, having determined to see his uncle before he took a final resolution. Mark Woodcock alone, from his knowledge of the man, had made up his mind that he would not arrive in time to fulfil his engagements.

Reports had reached England of the disaster which had befallen Sir Peregrine's vessel at Athens, although he himself had not written, and they added to the uncertainty and expectation into which every one of the parties concerned were thrown. Among others, the Goold Woodbys had been informed of what was passing, and, like all small folks who are happy to be concerned in the business of the great, they were constantly calling upon the Allnutts and making themselves officiously active in what concerned them not.

Mrs. Woodby, just returned from paying

a visit to Aunt Bab, came rushing in to her friend Lady Thomson with a face beaming with importance, and exclaimed, "Do you know what has happened? Why, I declare if there isn't Edward Manby, there!—you know who I mean?—that young man who was Tom's friend, nephew to the brewer at Liverpool, and who went off nobody knew where; well, he is likely to come in for at least ten thousand a year, and a great house and park."

"Is that really possible?" said Lady Thomson, equally astonished.

"It is as true as you sit there," said Mrs. Woodby. "I have just heard it from Barbara Allnutt, who is in such a taking lest her niece, after all, should only get the old baronet without his fortune!—which, you know, is the principal thing."

"Well, that will be extraordinary!" said Lady Thomson: "but how can this happen?"

"Why, it seems," said Mrs. Woodby, "that according to old Sir Roger's will, if his brother does not marry within six months after his death, then the money and estates go to the

nephew. Now, Edward, we knew before, was nephew to a baronet, and this is he;—isn't it a strange incidence?"

"Strange indeed!—Coincidence, you mean, my dear."

"I mean what I mean," said Mrs. Woodby.

"Now, the present baronet, Sir Peregrine, is a very eccentric man, one they call a great absentee, and it is supposed he has forgot all about it; for instead of coming straight home to his business, he is gone to discover the Temple of Solomon in Persia, and he is no more likely to get home within his time than he is to fly."

"The man must be a fool," said Lady Thomson: "the Temple of Solomon was built at Jerusalem—any body can tell that. I make it a rule to set everybody right, and I'll tell him so when I see him. If such is the case, I wish Miss Mary Allnutt joy of her old baronet! Why, she may just whistle for it, and remain Mary Allnutt for the rest of her life."

"But what a piece of luck for our Ellen!" said Mrs. Woodby. "As soon as she hears

this, the girl will become as much in love with Edward as ever she was; and as he can't get Mary now, whom he used to be going after when they lived at Ivycote, why, it's perfectly certain that we may get him if we only look sharp, and if Mr. Woodby will only bestir himself, and not be thinking all day long about his patent steam-apparatus."

"But what if Mary was now to throw over her old baronet and marry Edward?—there is nothing to hinder her," said Lady Thomson.

"Why, you see," said her friend, "that girl is one of your out-and-outers in doing what is right; and she wouldn't go from her word, not to please the king himself; and it's her being a saint, as she is called, that makes me think that our Ellen is secure of Edward. Why, she's engaged to Sir Peregrine by a bond — she's set her hand to it — she and her family were taken out of prison on account of this bond, and they have been living on it ever since. She can't be off if she would."

"I owe it to myself to say," said Lady Thomson, "that if I was Mary Allnutt, I

would no more marry Sir Peregrine without his fortune than I would marry you. I think I know what is right and proper, and all that, as well as any Mary Allnutt in the kingdom; and if she is fool enough, only because she has signed a bit of parchment, to tack herself to a beggarly baronet all the rest of her days, why, joy go with her! However, she knows her business, and I know mine; but if I was her, I would marry Manby, without the shadow of a doubt."

"That is what she shan't!" cried out Mrs. Woodby, perfectly outrageous at the view her friend had taken of the case. "I do not see why we are to be done out of a good thing when it comes in our way. We have as much right to Edward Manby as the Allnutts. We were in love with him first; he was our Tom's friend—he used to live at Belvedere when he hadn't a house to go to; and now that he is to be well off in the world, it is only doing as he should do,—and it will be a crying shame if he don't—to marry our Ellen. We'll have him here to dinner as sure as fate, and you'll

see how I'll manage him ! I know Ned pretty well I flatter myself ; he will go through fire and water to please me, and he'll marry when I hold up my finger and tell him to do so." Upon which Mrs. Woodby bustled away to seek her daughter Ellen, to inform her of the turn which affairs had taken, to order her to be in love again with Edward, and to write him a pressing note of invitation to dinner, and to stir up her husband to be kind and attentive to the youth.

In the mean while, there was great commotion in Gower-street, produced by a hasty visit from Mark Woodcock, who came to announce that Sir Peregrine and his vessel had been seen off Dover, and that Mr. Fairfax requested everything might be in readiness at a moment's notice for the wedding.

"Do not be in such a hurry," said Aunt Bab to Mark ; "do explain yourself a little more. What preparations are we to make ?—how can we marry without a husband ?"

"Sir Peregrine will be here in another hour, perhaps," said Mark : "he must either arrive

to-morrow or not at all, for the six months, according to law, will expire to-morrow night at twelve o'clock — that is, as soon as the clock strikes one — and then, if he be not married, the fortune goes to Edward Manby, that's all."

"But what are we to do? I only ask that," said Bab.

"Do?" said Mark; "why, arn't there clothes to be got, a ring to be purchased, and a veil to throw over the bride's head? Why, if you had seen the veils that I have seen in Turkey, where the women's eyes are peering out of a slit in the muslin, like bull's-eyes out of a bulkhead, you'd be surprised, and know what a real veil was."

"But at what time will the ceremony take place? arn't we to see Sir Peregrine first?" said Bab all bewildered.

"I know nothing of that," said Mark: "all that's *Kismet*, or fate, as we say in Turkey. He may or may not come, and then you may cry *Inshallah* or *Mashallah* as you please: *Inshallah*, please God — *Mashallah*, thanks be to God."

“Now do not tease us,” said Bab, “but speak plain sense. Who is to get the clergyman?”

“Leave that to Mr. Fairfax,” said Mark: “he gets the licence and the *mufti*. Get you Miss Mary quite ready: don’t let her wince when she sees Sir Peregrine — for I promise you he is a rare one; only take care he don’t marry you instead of Miss Mary, which he is just as likely to do, for he is mad after antiques.”

As soon as he was gone, Aunt Bab immediately made a report to her niece of the message, as well as to her brother and sister. Mary received it as a martyr would receive the order of being brought to the stake: her feelings had long been prepared for this event; and although her cheek was pale and her heart beat with unusual violence, still she demurred not, but did all that was necessary to be done.

Fanny had never yet entirely subdued the surprise which she evinced at the first outbreak of the whole affair of the marriage; for she could never comprehend how a girl was to be

married without courtship, and without any visible sign of a husband: she therefore contemplated the approaching hasty preparations as a mockery, and inquired if Mary was to be married to a name, and not to a substance. As for Uncle Able, as long as the baronet did not appear, he continued to speculate upon the uncertainty of all human schemes, and upon the possibility that his dear niece might still be remitted the trial of marrying one whom she could not love. However, when he heard Mark's message, in humble resignation he clasped his hands, bent down his head, and exclaimed, "God's will be done!"

The aunts busied themselves in making the proper purchases—the ceremony was appointed to take place in Gower-street—a bridal supper was prepared. Old Betty, as much bewildered and astonished as Aunt Fanny, went about setting things in order and arranging Mary's wardrobe as if she were about to depart from them for ever; and there was grief and heaviness at the bottom of every heart in the house. No one knew what was to come from this

strange state of things,—this husband and no husband — this fortune and no fortune — this great estate and no estate :—was Sir Peregrine in existence, or was the whole thing a mockery? Mark went and came a hundred times during the day, answering every question with dubious replies,—at one time giving hope, at another creating despondency. Mr. Fairfax himself was obliged to come and apologise for this uncertainty—this appearance of deceit and juggle.

The day—the last day of the expiring six months at length came ; and, perhaps, during the course of no other persons' lives, was such a day ever passed as was passed by the family of the Allnutts, and those interested in the events of which it was portentous.

Edward Manby, who was one of those principally concerned in the result of the events of that day, had of course been informed of the exact position in which he stood. He was poised upon the alternative of fortune or poverty,—of possessing her whom he cherished more than life, or of losing her and happiness for ever.

Notwithstanding his high principles, he could not refrain from being agitated by a thousand conflicting emotions. When Mary entreated him to resign himself to their separation, he had done so out of devotion to her, from that spirit of resignation which always beamed in his heart; but now such a strange concurrence of circumstances had accumulated, that his mind was quite bewildered when he reflected upon the peculiarity of his situation. If his uncle did not arrive by one o'clock after midnight of the following day, he became the owner of a large fortune, with the chance of possessing Mary: if, on the contrary, he did arrive, then he remained an outcast, an adventurer, and a dependant upon his uncle's bounty.

Early in the morning of the day in question, a message was sent from Gower-street to inquire from Mr. Fairfax whether Sir Peregrine was arrived. The answer was, "No, but that he was expected every moment." At noon Mark Woodcock came to say, that he had not yet appeared; but that a messenger had been

dispatched in a swift rowing-boat down the river to discover the vessel, and, if possible, to bring Sir Peregrine back with him.

Towards dinner-time another message came to say, that the vessel had certainly passed the Downs, and, as the wind was fair, Sir Peregrine might be expected during the evening, and that at eight o'clock the clergyman would be in waiting.

The Miss Goold Woodbys offered their services to be Mary's bridesmaids, and their mother and Lady Thomson threw out hints of their desire to be invited to the wedding; but the intimation was received with great coolness; for how was it possible, even with the best of feeling, to encourage the advances of friendship from persons so utterly unworthy of esteem? Mary's bridesmaids were to be her aunts; a family arrangement much better suited to the quiet ceremony which was about to take place.

The proper license having been obtained, every arrangement was made preparatory to the wedding. The two aunts appeared in their

best, Abel did not spare his black trousers and silk stockings, whilst old Betty looked renovated in a handsome gown and fresh-coloured ribands.

Mark Woodcock, at the appointed hour, introduced the clergyman, announcing it to be Mr. Fairfax's intention to bring Sir Peregrine as soon as he should arrive. Mary was in readiness, but we will not attempt to describe either her appearance or her feelings. They could be explained by no comparison that we can devise; for that of a criminal led to execution would be too strong, and that of a lamb led to slaughter inappropriate.

The whole party (excepting the clergyman) might be said to be in a high state of excitement; for even Mark, from the intense interest which he had taken in the whole transaction, was hardly in possession of his reason. The evening was passed with scarcely any words being uttered, but ejaculations such as these: — “He will certainly come” — “I wonder whether he will come” — “’Tis strange he does not come!” — “He must come” — “It will

really be a miracle if he does come now." Then, when the least noise was heard, "There he is!—No—it is not him.—I think there was a knock;—no—it was not." Then, as fast as the hours passed away, every one said, "'Tis now past ten;" then, "Eleven is striking." From that hour to twelve, Mary's heart almost beat audibly: her aunts were obliged to administer restoratives. Mark frequently looked into the street, for his impatience had exceeded all bounds;—Abel walked about and said nothing;—the poor divine was kept in small chat by Aunt Fanny; whilst Bab nursed Mary. Twelve o'clock struck: Mark returned from the street looking in a state of bewilderment; the clergyman drew forth his book, and squared the table with two candles upon it. The hands of the clock pointed to half-past twelve: a dead silence ensued,—nothing was said, excepting now and then Mark exclaiming, "How odd!" The minutes were counted,—a distant rumble of a carriage was heard in the street: "There he is!" said Mark. The carriage went by: "No, it's not him." One

o'clock struck : Mary could no longer bear up against the intensity of her excited feelings,—she fainted, and thus closed the whole scene for the night. Edward had been watching at the door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A meeting takes place which portends the termination of our history.

THE next morning, Mr. Fairfax having requested Edward Manby's attendance at his office, informed him with all due formality that, as executor and trustee of his late uncle Sir Roger Oldbourn's will, in consequence of his brother not having complied with the provisions thereof, he, Edward, was become possessor of the fortune and the estate, provided that in addition to his own name he took that of Oldbourn.

Edward at first would not believe that such could be the case, nor was he satisfied until he perused the precise words of the will, when he found that in truth he was endowed with the

wealth alleged by Mr. Fairfax. Staggered by this intelligence, he could scarcely be said to be overjoyed, for it did not include the possession of the only treasure which he prized in the world,—namely, the hand of his beloved Mary. We pass over all that was said on the occasion—the exclamations of surprise at the non-appearance of the intended heir, and the congratulations on the accession of the more fortunate one, but go at once to where Mary, her uncle and aunts, were collected together in earnest discussion upon the strange event which had taken place. Mary's agitation on the preceding night had been so great, that her relations were fearful lest her former disorder should return with a fatal result to the future sanity of her mind ; but so well had she succeeded in acquiring control over her feelings, that to their astonishment the next morning they found her in full possession of her reason. She had ardently prayed for a speedy termination to her present state of uncertainty ; and in so doing she so much strengthened her feel-

ings of resignation, that she was enabled to assume a calm though serious aspect, at a time when she was supposed to be sinking under nervous agitation. Bab came to the conclusion that her intended was a madman,—Fanny asserted that she would rather die than marry one who had forgotten his engagements,—and Abel avowed that all was for the best, not daring to give utterance to his hopes that the present contingency would bring about that result for which they all so much yearned.

During their conversation, Abel was called away to attend some one asking to see him; and he immediately suspected it to be Edward Manby. He was not mistaken: the first impulse of Edward after the interview which he had had with Mr. Fairfax, was to seek his friend Abel. When they met, Edward informed Abel of the new and extraordinary aspect which his affairs had taken, and proclaimed his intention of renouncing the fortune of which he had become the possessor, in favour of its intended owner. He was determined to do this principally from the desire of not destroying the prospects of

Mary ; and then he continued to argue, that as the object of the testator was about to be fulfilled in the marriage which would speedily take place, he did not see why he was to take advantage of a mere casualty in order to destroy the real intention of the will. He said this with a humility of feeling and a total absence of display that can only belong to the really pure and honest of heart, and the effect which it had upon Abel was as if an angel spoke.

Abel answered little, for his heart was too full to utter ; but his whole manner showed how deeply he was affected. He would have given free scope to the expression of his hope ; but he feared to excite Edward to expect what perhaps might never come to pass, seeing that Mary was still as much bound as ever to the baronet : he therefore restricted himself to making him assurances of friendship, and expressing unbounded admiration of his noble and disinterested conduct.

Edward no sooner returned to his lodgings, than he received a note from Mr. Fairfax, in-

forming him of the arrival of his uncle Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, and requesting him to call, in order that he might have the pleasure of making them acquainted.

It appears that this event,—namely, the arrival of Sir Peregrine,—took place just twenty-four hours after the time when he ought to have arrived. Having resisted landing at Dover, he persevered in accompanying his antiquarian treasures to the very Custom-house in London, by which act he dispossessed himself of the fortune awaiting him ; a circumstance which almost passed unheeded in his mind, so totally was he wrapt up in his own immediate pursuits. To the very last, he would not separate himself from his Venus ; but having landed the statue, with his baggage, he betook himself to an hotel, of which he had not happened to forget the name, where having established himself with his foreign servants, he then sent for Mr. Fairfax. In the room allotted to him, he deposited his beautiful statue, together with other of his favourite relics, and there he awaited the solicitor ; the whole

scheme and object of Mark Woodcock's visit to him at Smyrna being faintly present to his memory.

Mark, at the request of Mr. Fairfax, accompanied him to visit the baronet ; and we would endeavour, were it in our power, to give to our reader the impression which Sir Peregrine's whole appearance made upon the matter-of-fact man of business, and in some less degree upon his companion. He was arrayed in a suit of clothes made by a Greek tailor at Athens, which he fondly flattered himself would place him on an equality with men of the best fashion in his own country, and these he put on out of compliment to London, because usually he clothed himself with any piece of Eastern costume that came to hand upon getting out of bed in the morning. He consequently looked more like a convict condemned to do penance in bags with holes cut into them, than a gentleman appropriately dressed. The fashion of his face and hair was still Oriental, for it had been trimmed by a Greek barber : he wore yellow pabouches, a sash

round his waist, and disdained the use of a neckcloth.

When Mr. Fairfax entered, he was seated on the ground cross-legged, examining an old coin; and when he arose to receive him, the solicitor looked some time at him ere he could persuade himself that this was indeed the representative of a long line of baronets. Sir Peregrine inspected them both, and recognising Mark, he exclaimed, "Ah! my dear Mr. Wood, how do you do?" Mark took him by the hand and said, "*Cock*, if you please."

"Ah, true, true," said the oblivious man; "you always were jealous of the cock.—How do you do, Mr. *Cockwood*?"

"*Woodcock*, if you please," cried Mark.

"I beg your pardon, I shall have it at last. But is this Mr. Fairfax?" Upon which, the recognition having taken place, the antiquary turned round, and pointing to his Venus, exclaimed, "Here let me introduce you to the wonder of the age! Of course you have heard of my celebrated Venus?"

“No, sir,” said Mr. Fairfax; “although I have seen your live one.”

“Ah, that’s very well,” said the antiquary, not in the least heeding his allusion; “but you know perhaps some have asserted this is a Latona? But that is a fallacy, believe me it is. I think I can prove beyond a doubt, it is in truth the *chef-d’œuvre* of Praxiteles—the very Venus of Cnidus, which, in the frequent revolutions among the Greeks, might have been deposited among the wonders at Delos. But it is not a Latona—it has none of the characteristics of that goddess;—do you think it has, now, Mr. Fairfax?” said he, turning abruptly towards him.

“I really cannot say,” said the man of business.

“You cannot say!” exclaimed the antiquary. “Maybe then, you are a Latonian—pray explain your reasons.”

“Indeed, sir,” said the lawyer, “I am not versed in these matters: I can scarcely tell you whether a piece of art be well or ill done. I

am a great deal better versed in statutes than in statues."

"But you, Mr. Woodcock," said the enthusiastic man,—“you have been in Asia, you are a travelled man, you have seen the miraculous works of the ancients on their own soil; tell me, have you ever seen anything more exquisite in its proportions, more lovely in its expression than that statue? Now tell me honestly.”

“No, indeed,” said Mark with hesitation, looking all the while with a critic’s eye at the beautiful object before him; “no, I can’t say I have, although I have seen all the old things in the British Museum.”

The antiquary turned away without saying a word more, when Mr. Fairfax, having summoned up all his courage, said, “We have been waiting for you with extreme impatience, Sir Peregrine; and it is very painful to me to inform you that you arrived just twenty-four hours too late to save the fortune left to you by your late lamented brother. Every preparation was made to the very last moment, in order that you might fulfil his intentions; a

wife, a most charming and unexceptionable young lady, was awaiting you—and had you arrived but a day sooner, I should have had the great satisfaction of accomplishing, as executor and trustee, the wishes and intentions of my late friend and patron. But as it is, the law must take its course; and the estate goes to your nephew, Mr. Edward Manby. The wife is still at your disposal—she is bound under a bond to marry you, and by that bond she still abides.”

Sir Peregrine, during this speech, sat immovable; his countenance never changing, nor his person exhibiting the least sign of agitation. After having kept silence for a short time, he said, “Am I bound to marry her?”

“Why, sir, as to that,” said the lawyer, “although there are penalties on both sides, still I think, if after you have seen her you would wish to be disengaged from your obligation, there would not be much difficulty to encounter.”

“That’s well!” said Sir Peregrine; “we must see what is to be done. You must advise

me; — I have been unlucky in my voyage, — I was detained at Athens by an unforeseen accident; but the possession of that beautiful object" (pointing to his statue) "has repaid me for all. You know the Oldbourns make but poor husbands, and perhaps the young lady will have a lucky escape if she does not marry me. However, I have no objection to see her; I would not do an improper thing on any account."

Mr. Fairfax then entered into a full explanation as to the steps he had taken to procure a proper wife; that he had succeeded in securing one who corresponded in every respect to the person described in the will, and particularly dwelt upon the ancient descent of her family, a circumstance which he thought would be likely to awaken an interest in his client's breast.

Sir Peregrine listened with attention; but antiquity, as characterising a living person, had no charms for him, and he waved the topic, as if he were anxious to drive the subject of marriage from his mind. "I make no doubt,"

said he, "that the lady is everything that is proper, and I am much obliged to you for the care that you have taken of my interests; but I think, Mr. Fairfax, you said that my nephew is to have the Oldbourn property? Let me see my nephew—I long to see one of my own family; and allow me to ask you something about him. Does he show any of the Oldbourn blood? My poor sister was a charming creature before she married; but after that fatal event we never saw her more."

"Your nephew," said Mr. Fairfax, "is a most remarkable young man, and will not fail to do credit to your name, or to any name that he may bear. It is indeed a great pity that he was so neglected by his mother's family; but the circumstance of his having been buffeted about the world, may perhaps have been the means of forming his fine manly character,—a character which, had it run the usual career of young men of family and fashion, might perhaps have remained commonplace and insignificant. I think you will be greatly pleased with him. I have written to inform

him of your arrival, and I shall not fail to bring him to you immediately."

"Do you think he has any love for antiquity?" said the baronet, quite elated with Mr. Fairfax's description. "Has he sufficient taste to appreciate the Oldbourn collection?"

"I believe him to be very highly educated," said the lawyer, "and am sure that he has a mind sufficiently refined to appreciate excellence wherever he may find it."

"I long to show him my Venus!" exclaimed the antiquary.

"If any one can value it as it ought," said Mr. Fairfax, "you may be certain that he will. I have never before met with a person possessing so true a judgment as Mr. Manby; but I will forthwith bring him to you, and you shall judge for yourself." Upon which, taking their leave, the solicitor, followed by Mark, left the room.

As soon as they had got fairly into the street, Mr. Fairfax exclaimed, "Well, I never could have conceived the existence of such an individual! Why, he out-stoics every stoic of an-

cient times ! he gives up an immense fortune as easily as I would relinquish my breakfast !”

“But he would not give up his statue, though,” said Mark ; “ he ’d fight till he died first. Old rubbish is the god he adores—he doesn’t care a pin for lucre. Why, he has got an old brass nail that he wouldn’t give for any amount of three per cents. or for any quantity of lands and tenements that you could offer to him. Just ask him to show you that old nail, and you ’ll see what a fuss he will make about it !”

CHAPTER XIX.

Apparent miseries work for our good. When happiness does come at the end of a book, it is generally supreme.

WHEN Mr. Fairfax reached home, he found Edward Manby waiting for him, who, anxious to become acquainted with his uncle, had not lost a moment in obeying the summons he had received. The lawyer giving him an account of his first interview, prepared him for the sort of personage he was about to meet; and thought it right, moreover, to hint the repugnance which he still showed to marriage, and the desire he expressed to be freed from the bond which at present united him to Miss Allnutt. When Edward heard these words, he was seized with a confusion of sensations so sudden that he was scarcely able to stand. A

vague and indefinite hope had occasionally run through his mind that some casualty might operate in his favour and give him the possession of his beloved Mary, but he always dismissed the thought as felicity too much for mortal to expect. When he heard from Mr. Fairfax how likely it became that this hope might be realised, he could scarcely restrain his emotion. He endeavoured to suppress it to the utmost of his power, and hoping that his agitation was unobserved by his companion, he followed him to his uncle's.

Perhaps another less scrupulous than Edward would have now annulled the intention of restoring the fortune which had devolved to him; but as he walked onward he determined even now, after what he had heard, not to be cheated out of his integrity, and he strengthened himself in his original resolution by every argument which honour and honesty could devise, notwithstanding the fascinating hope held out to him.

When Edward entered the room with Mr. Fairfax, his uncle immediately stepped up to

him and welcomed him with as much cordiality as if they had been long acquainted. He eyed him with great earnestness, and as soon as Edward spoke he exclaimed, "The Oldbourn nose and mouth all over! I see your mother's expression in every look!" Scarcely giving him time to speak, he took him to his Venus and said, "There! what do you think of that?" expecting that one with Oldbourn blood in his veins would instantly be as much fascinated by a piece of antiquity, as a thorough-bred pointer would with the scent of game.

Although Edward's mind and heart were full of other things, still, being an excessive admirer and an equally good judge of art, he could not refrain from being much struck by the beauty of the statue before him. His admiration was genuine—his first sensations true, and his observations so just, that Sir Peregrine could almost have devoured him with delight. The antiquary first looked at him, then at his statue, then at him again, as if his existence depended upon Edward's decision.

At length he said, with an inquiring look, "You agree that it is a Venus?"

"Certainly," said Edward — "but perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?" exclaimed his uncle.

"— Perhaps it might be the Phryne as Venus Anadyomene of Praxiteles. I think it was consecrated in the Temple at Delos—does not Pausanias say so? I dare say you will help me if I am not right — but you must know best."

Upon hearing these words, the antiquary positively danced about the room with delight; then running up and embracing Edward, he exclaimed, "My dear nephew, you are right—you are right. The whole thing is now before me — we both are in the right. Praxiteles did make a statue of Phryne: it was his masterpiece. She put a trick upon him: he was struck by her beauty at the sea-shore—he there planned his Venus coming out of the sea. You are right—and this is the very statue, there is no doubt of it. I'll throw all my dissertations in the fire and write new ones."

Charmed with Edward, his learning, and his taste, he could not sufficiently express the delight of possessing him as a relation, and he would have continued to descant upon the everlasting subject of his collections and his literary schemes, had he not been stopped by Mr. Fairfax, whose time being precious, put him upon the less agreeable subject of his own affairs. It was then that Edward, having made a few preliminary remarks upon the delicate situation in which by circumstances of a most extraordinary nature he had been placed, in an energetic and decided manner avowed himself ready to renounce in favour of its intended owner the large fortune which had devolved upon him.

The lawyer and the antiquary upon hearing this declaration looked both equally astonished. "A second Zeno!" exclaimed the one,— "This is unheard of!" exclaimed the other.

Sir Peregrine at length, apparently laying aside all his eccentricities, and talking like other men, said with emphasis, "My dear nephew, the little I have seen of you has excited

my highest admiration, and this last trait of your character convinces me more than anything else, that you alone are worthy to possess the fortune which by circumstances has fallen to your lot. In your hands it must and shall remain—for in truth it will be a great relief to me that this arrangement should hold good. I have a fortune sufficient at present for all my wants—more would be an incumbrance. My pleasures lie in my books, my antiquities, and in the society of men of my own tastes; and now that I have found in you one whom had my brother known, he would have cherished even as much as I ever will cherish;—I am sure he would have been delighted to find that his fortune was to fall into your hands;—I therefore insist upon your retaining the possession of that which was intended for me. Your society, your house and its vast collections, will ever, I am sure, be open to me the same as if they were my own; and I shall enjoy everything that I can require, without the trouble of superintendence. But there only remains one thing to dispose of, which, I will

not hide from you, gives me serious uneasiness;—that is, the young lady who is to be my wife.”

At these words all Edward's agitation returned, and one might have seen every pulse throb, so intensely was he excited. Mr. Fairfax, looking at him, and interpreting the confusion of his looks, said, smiling, to Sir Peregrine, “Why, as to that, sir, your nephew there, who in taking everything from you, seems only to increase your pleasure, I make no doubt will take your wife off your hands, as well as your fortune.”

“Will he indeed !” exclaimed the baronet, his face lighting up into extravagant joy, as if he had received a reprieve from death.—“How can this be ?”

“My dear sir,” said Edward, “I will not detain you by a long recital of the various extraordinary events which have so fallen out as to make the interesting person whom I had once hoped to call my own, and she who is bound to you as your wife, one and the same individual. In renouncing her hand, you put

the seal upon my happiness, and, I may venture to say, upon hers. Necessity of the most pressing nature threw her into your hands — earlier attachment into mine. Should you confirm your resolution after you have seen her, (which, alas! I fear and doubt,) you will render two mortals supremely happy.”

The baronet was a second time thrown into a rapture of delight. “You charm me,” said he. “You ask no sacrifice of me—it is a blessing which you confer. I am not made for married life—I can add to no one’s happiness, and therefore it is wicked in me to attempt it. I therefore freely yield my pretensions in your favour; and now let us go and say so to the lady herself, for already I ought to have gone through the ceremony of being presented to her.”

The ecstasy of joy into which Edward was thrown upon finding the turn which his affairs took may be more easily conceived than described. He felt as if the whole were a dream, and he had not sufficient power over himself to decide at the moment what to do;

but whilst his uncle went to prepare himself for going out, like one impelled more by instinct than reason, without saying whither he went, he left Mr. Fairfax in the room alone, and having got into the street, he actually ran, for walking was too slow for his impatience, and scarcely knowing how, found himself breathless and bewildered at the door of his friend Abel. Knocking violently, he was immediately admitted; and when he saw him, threw himself into his arms.

“What can have happened?” said Abel, staring with astonishment. “Edward, are you mad?”

“I am very nearly so,” said Edward, “but with joy. Mary is mine—for ever mine! Oh, let me see her to tell her so! I have spoken to my uncle, and he gives her up. Where is she?”

Abel, having in some measure anticipated this event, caught the infection of Edward's joy, and exhibited strong symptoms of the greatest exhilaration; he would have seconded his desire to be the harbinger of the news to

Mary, had not his prudence very seasonably overtaken him and made him pause.

“My dear Edward,” he said, “for pity’s sake calm your feelings: let us be cautious — this must be broken to Mary by degrees, or else we may have to rue our precipitation. Her state of health is far from strong; her nerves at this particular moment are so treacherous that any great shock of pleasure or of pain might destroy the powers of her mind, and the consequences might be fatal. Let me first go and prepare her to see you.”

Edward with repugnance consented to his proposal; and he condemned himself to the penance of being supremely happy alone, in the very same spot where not long since he had been so supremely miserable.

Ever since the night when she waited with bitter expectation the appearance of her intended, Mary had been torn by a thousand conflicting hopes and fears, which combined would probably have destroyed the equilibrium of her mind, had she not been supported by the all-powerful aid of religion. She never for a mo-

ment allowed herself to lose sight of its consolations ; and having made that take the first place in her mind, the world and its cares became secondary in her consideration. She was seated in the drawing-room with her aunts : they had heard Edward's rapid knock at the door, had duly wondered what it could portend, and had scarcely finished their speculations, when Abel, with a face usually so calm and serious, now so beaming with joy, came in, and, with cautious words and mystery in his manner, prepared his niece for what was to happen.

When ecstasies are once elicited, what language can adequately portray the exciting causes ? The woe-stricken maiden having at the first word of hope pronounced by her uncle caught up the whole of his meaning, as when a match applied to a grain of powder in a train of fireworks, ignites the whole and casts a brilliant and dazzling light, so she suddenly was excited into rapturous delight. When she heard the words, " Sir Peregrine annuls the bond and Edward is here," she flew towards Abel, and throwing herself

upon his neck, wept aloud, thus relieving her heart of that accumulation of woe which had so long preyed upon it, and hailing the happiness of her future life as a gift from Heaven.

Bab and Fanny almost danced with joy, and whilst Abel was encouraging Mary in her joyful transports, they ran down stairs to Edward, who having expended part of the ebullition of his feelings in embracing the old aunts, in another second was locked in the arms of the adored and expectant mistress of his heart.

They had not long enjoyed the raptures of interchanging their mutual sentiments, before Sir Peregrine and Mr. Fairfax were announced. Uncle Abel and his sisters received them with the greatest welcome in their looks, and although they said little, evinced by their attentions and the pleasure which beamed in their faces how much they would say when a proper opportunity should offer.

Sir Peregrine, having abstracted himself from his favourite pursuits, did not allow his usual absence of mind to stand in the way of his good-breeding; and although nothing could

entirely subdue the habitual eccentricity of his manner and appearance, still nothing also could entirely conceal those particular tokens by which a man is discovered to be a gentleman. In making a few civil speeches, apologising for the delay of his appearance, and explaining that delay, his eye caught a glimpse of Edward, who had retired to the recess of the window with Mary, both their backs being turned towards him, and he exclaimed, "So, my gallant nephew, you are here! we thought you lost."

Edward turned quickly round, and with him his fair companion, beaming with a beauty so entirely captivating, that as she approached the baronet, he retreated some steps, as if his own statue had received animation and was walking towards him.

"This is my niece Mary Allnutt," said Uncle Abel to the awe-stricken gentleman, who stood with his mouth open and with his eyes as much fascinated as when he had been first introduced to his Venus at Delos.

Without replying a word to Abel, he turned

towards Mr. Fairfax, and in an under voice said, "Is this the lady whom I have kept waiting?"

Fairfax having assured him that it was, he assumed the look of a man angry with himself for having given away a good thing. His usual apathy and indifference of manner forsook him; he almost coloured—his hands became spasmodic—he said a few incoherent words, and looked like anything but one of the Grecian sages whom it was his ambition to rival.

Edward, who stood by observing, dived at once with the quick apprehension of a lover into his uncle's sensations; and a deadly fear overtook him, lest he should repent the cession he had made, and require the accomplishment of his bond. As rapidly as this fear increased, so did the colour forsake his face; and had Mary not been taken up with making herself agreeable to one who was now entitled to her gratitude, she very probably would not have so exercised her dangerous power of fascination.

Mr. Fairfax, seeing the effect which Mary's beauty had produced upon his client, and having cast an eye of commiseration upon Edward, now came forward, and taking the bond from his pocket, said to Sir Peregrine, "This is the bond which Miss Allnutt has signed, which I executed in your name, and which bound you to each other as man and wife. Is it your mutual pleasure that it be destroyed?" In saying this he held it in both his hands, in the act of tearing.

Sir Peregrine with unusual activity bounded forwards, and seizing it, said, "Stay your hand!"

Edward on seeing this became pale, and looked even like death. He could not utter a word, for what had he to say? His uncle held the deed fast clenched, and, with eyes devouring Mary's beauty, resembled that figure in the well-known picture which stands wrapt in uncertainty between Virtue and Vice. "I am Miss Allnutt's slave!" said the baronet, at length finding courage to speak: "let her pronounce my doom, and I obey."

Mary having by this time cast her eyes upon the desponding Edward, and catching the contagion of his fear, with woman's wit, and with a voice as gentle and persuasive as the softest harmony, said, "Mr. Manby and myself are both of us dependant upon Sir Peregrine Oldbourn's generosity. A word from him will render us happy—the contrary——" and she finished her sentence by tears.

Edward's uncle, upon hearing these words, without a moment's delay took the deed and tore it in half, saying aloud, "What folly have I been committing!"—then thrusting forward his hand to Edward, he said, "Excuse my weakness—I was not prepared for such incomparable beauty, such surpassing excellence! May every blessing and happiness attend you both! There! take her—no one can merit such a treasure as well as yourself: and now let us think of the wedding."

CHAPTER XX.

Conclusion and Moral.

WE would willingly here have closed our narrative; for, having secured happiness and prosperity to our principal personages, we do not think that in justice the reader can require more at our hands. Still, we feel called upon to administer poetical justice to those who in a secondary capacity have been accessories to producing this result, and we begin with the Goold Woodbys.

Edward having returned to his lodgings elated with love and joy, was surprised by receiving a visit from Tom Woodby. It seems that his mother, in consequence of the scheme

which she had put forth in the conversation with Lady Thomson recorded in a former chapter, had written first a pressing invitation to Edward to dinner, and afterwards one still more pressing to take up his quarters in their house. These he had most positively rejected, and for obvious reasons. The wily woman, determined not to be foiled, persuaded her son to endeavour to renew his former acquaintance with Edward; and this visit was the result of that act of persuasion.

Tom approached him with outstretched hand, and with every cringing and fawning demonstration of intimacy; when Edward stopped him short, and rejecting his hand, said, "Mr. Woodby, I will be plain with you, and explain in two words why I disclaim all further intercourse with you and your family. Your conduct to me when I was in adversity does not warrant this proffered friendship now that I am likely to enjoy the reverse. Of that, however, I take no count; but the knowledge which I have acquired of the base conduct of your family to my friends, who are shortly to

be my relations, the Allnutts, and your own atrocious profligacy, impels me to inform you that I feel myself degraded by any further acquaintance with you. I therefore request you to leave me instantly, and never again to show your face within my doors."

On hearing these words, the defeated wretch exhibited all the villany of his nature in the expression of his countenance, and began to bluster and to talk of satisfaction; when Edward, opening the door and pointing to it, said, "This, sir, is your way out; and now you know the terms upon which we are and ever shall be towards each other."

Tom would still have delayed, and continued to bluster; but seeing the cool and determined position which Edward had taken up, he thought it proper to retreat, exclaiming as he made a rapid descent down the stairs, "You shall hear from me again!" accompanying this vain threat by a running fire of oaths, which continued *crescendo* until he closed them by a violent concussion of the street-door. It need not be said, that Edward never

felt the effects of his threat, nor ever saw him more.

When the Woodby family, foiled in securing the friendship of either Edward or the Allnutts, became acquainted with the result of Edward's history, and that he was to marry Mary, (for the strange event was in everybody's mouth,) they felt as if a personal injury had been done to them, and they went about almost foaming at the mouth.

"Is it not a shame," said Mrs. Woodby, "that those infamous people should be marrying at this rate, when we were the first to make them acquainted? And if it had not been for our fancy-ball, and our house, and our supper, they never would have known each other—a set of proud wretches, with their earl for a relation! But I'll be even with them—I'll let them starve first, before they shall ever set foot in Belvedere Hall again!"

"The girl, after all, is not to be Lady Oldbourn," said Lady Thomson. "In justice to myself, I must say, that it would have been a crying shame, that a pert thing like her

should have walked out of the room before me !”

“ I wonder Tom did not call that poor creature Edward Manby out,” said Anne, “ for his impertinence in saying he no longer wished for our acquaintance. If I was a man, I’d go and pull his nose.”

“ Edward can pull noses as well as the best of them,” said Ellen, still upholding the former man of her heart. “ Although he is a faithless villain, still he is no coward.”

They almost worked themselves into a fever of envy when they heard of the excessive happiness and prosperity which now pervaded the Allnutts. Ivycote was once again to be inhabited by Uncle Abel and his sisters, — the Mexican funds were looking up, — and John Allnutt was soon expected. Their evil passions were kept alive by Mark Woodcock, who, with the best of dispositions for doing good, had a sufficient spice of malice in his composition to enjoy their torments, and did not fail to inform them, in the most high-sounding words, of the flood of wealth and worldly

prosperity daily pouring over them. Even he, Mark, had the satisfaction in his own person to add to their mortification; for Mrs. Woodby, viewing him as a rising man in his profession, and as one who in the course of things was likely to be one of those who rub themselves against lords and dignitaries, had selected him as fit to be a son-in-law; but the clear-sighted lawyer soon perceiving her intentions, did not leave her in doubt about his views, for he ceased to accept her invitations, and, to use his own words, “cut the old one dead.” And the event proved the excellence of his discrimination; for old Woodby having speculated in the funds out of his depth, became half-ruined, — was obliged to sell Belvedere, to put down his fine carriage, his servants in plush and tags, and retire to a villa at Brixton; whilst Tom became a blackleg of the first notoriety, his nose being so accustomed to pulling, that it was the acknowledged place of essay for young practitioners in gambling and broils. Anne at length succeeded in marrying Captain Swaggle, who was

fairly cajoled into thinking her “ a great City catch ;” and Ellen, after many unsuccessful attempts at gaining an establishment, went upon the stage and acted chambermaids or love-sick damsels.

As for Lady Thomson, having made her last curtsey to the Woodbys and their prosperity, avowing that she owed it to herself, and that she always made it a rule, never to associate with those who could not keep their own coach, she duly bestowed herself upon another rising family, new to wealth, aspiring to fashion and Cheltenham, and in the same manner that she had presided over the destinies of her former friends, so she ruled over her new ; trading upon the advantage of being her ladyship, and hiring herself out as a sort of job Lady Bab Frightful to novices in the ways of the world. Lord Demone continued to be a wit and a sensualist as long as he had sensation and intellect left to support those characters ; after which he became a morose old man, at variance with the world, complaining of its neglect, and dying with regret that he

had not made a better use of life. Simpleton Sharp, having strained hard for nearly a quarter of a century to say a good thing, at length succeeded in producing a tolerable pun, upon the celebrity of which he lived contented, and which contributed much to make him die happy.

Thus having given a short sketch of those who probably have created as little interest in the breasts of our readers as their prototypes in reality would be likely to do, we hasten to return to the scene of joy and happiness which we have left. There only wanted one requisite to the complete satisfaction of all parties, and that was the return of Mary's father, an event not long delayed. Accounts were received from him from the East Indies, which he reached after leaving Acapulco, having previously touched at Manilla; and he announced his intention of returning to England through Egypt, in order to make the ruler of that vast country partake of his schemes for improving and civilising his dominions.

In the mean while, preparations for the

wedding went on with the greatest vigour. Aunt Bab, who had never before presided at such a ceremony, lived in a state of constant wonder and alarm at the immense number of things which she was assured were indispensable for the outfit of a modern bride ; and when the French milliner gave in a catalogue of the articles which composed the *trousseau*, (which Bab always pronounced *trusso* !) her face exhibited a length as formidable as the said catalogue. As for Aunt Fanny, she lived in a state of joyful excitement, looking over gowns, examining petticoats, and trying on caps.

At length, some few days before the ceremony was to take place, John Allnutt, or, as he was usually called, the Major, actually did arrive ; and we will not attempt to describe the joy diffused by his timely appearance. Mary's happiness was now without alloy, for she was blest by her father's approbation of her marriage ; and Edward was delighted to be acquainted with his father-in-law, and at length to see the man whom he had chased from the Atlantic to the Pacific without seeing

him. The Major was revelling in delight; and having now seen enough of the world to find out that its inhabitants were determined to go their own way to work in search of happiness, he allowed every preparation for the wedding of his daughter to proceed unmolested. But one thing which most pleased him was, the being enabled to make an appropriate gift to Sir Peregrine Oldbourn, and accordingly he presented him with a most magnificent mummy which he had brought from Thebes. Sir Peregrine was much moved by this delicate attention, and in return selected from the Oldbourn collection, much prized by the learned, and highly valued by collectors on account of its scarcity, a Roman weathercock, with all the proper rust upon it, and the points of the compass properly marked, which offering he duly laid at the feet of his intended father-in-law. These and such like acts of friendship having taken place, a perfect union existing between all parties, all legal adjustments having been concluded by the active Mark, who became all in all to

the whole party, the happy couple were duly taken to St. George's church, and thence launched into matrimony through the medium of a new travelling carriage and four horses, which darting through the gaping multitude, carried them to the shades of Oldbourn Hall.

There they lived—there they flourished, dispensing happiness to all around; and there we will leave them to the undisturbed possession of their well-merited felicity.

To those who, like children, read the fable merely for amusement's sake, without looking at the 'moral' at the end, we recommend here to close the book.

The few words we have still to say will explain why we have exalted the lowly Abel to our title page, when perhaps it may be said he is not the principal person concerned; and those few words we wish to produce as our 'moral.'

Ever since that good man's confinement in prison, his health had been on the decline. On a person and features like his, which always looked sickly, the progress of disease was not so remarkable as upon that of a man in strong health: consequently, although he himself felt that his strength was much impaired, and that the functions of life were gradually declining, still others did not perceive the decay. His affectionate niece, it is true, would occasionally with tears in her eyes gaze upon his calm and resigned face, and taking his hand, would entreat him to tell her whether he was quite well,

and he would assure her that he was as well as usual ; but others, and even his sisters, did not remark the slow effects of a fatal disorder. He indeed in secret cherished the hope that his life might be a short one : he lived in one continued act of preparation for death,—his thoughts were entirely abstracted from the world ; and whilst others only dreamt of realities, he with speculative contemplation would endeavour to pierce the secrets of that future state of existence which is promised as the haven of rest from the cares of this life.

With such a mind, and with such views, whilst he was overlooked among men and even contemned as insignificant, he enjoyed more real happiness than the most blessed in worldly circumstances, basking in the sunshine of the world. It is because he was in our estimation as nearly perfect in character, exercising the many virtues which form the Christian man, that we promoted him to be the hero of our title-page,—a promotion which he would certainly never have enjoyed from the hands of

the world ; for we suspect that there are many such characters in existence, who, with the want of comeliness of our hero, enjoy also his modesty and his peace of mind, and it is to do them honour that we venture to take this step.

The honeymoon had scarcely expired before the happy Mary was called upon to attend her sick, and (it was no longer a secret) her dying uncle. She was accompanied by Edward, and with breathless speed reached the house in Gower-street where he lay. They found him in full possession of his reason, though scarcely able to make his words understood. But words were not necessary to explain the state of his mind, when his countenance, upon which was imprinted the liveliness of his faith and the soothing character of his hope, was there to speak for him. Could he have thus been paraded among the haunts of the wicked, and exhibited to the thoughtless man of the world, with a superscription to say, " See the death of a true Christian ;"

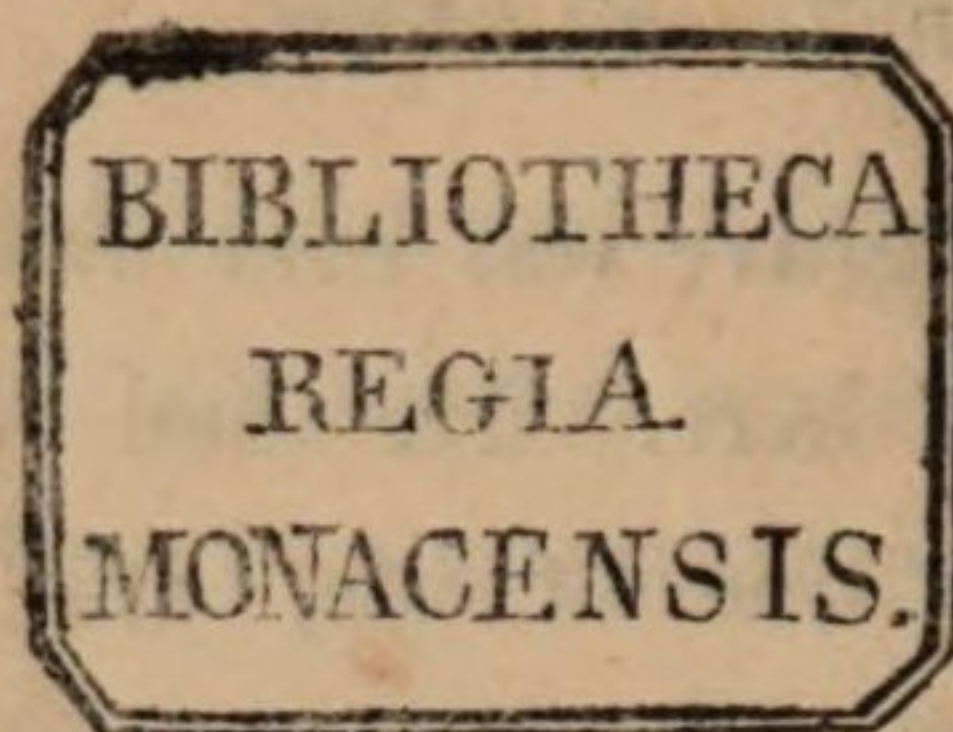
such an exhibition would have tended more to draw men from evil ways, and bring them to a sense of what they will all surely come to, than all the sermons and homilies in the world.

With slow accents he said : “ Though death be bitter, still this is happiness — this is my happiness ; therefore rejoice with me. I know that you have all the same hope with me ; therefore we only separate to meet again. I die, relying on the promises of our Saviour. — Dearest Mary, and you, my good Edward, — you must and will have your trials ; but faint not, persevere in all good. My dear Barbara, and you, my dear Fanny,—but a few more years and you will be where I am ; then think on me, and think how happy I am. John ! take my place, — comfort our sisters, I bequeath them to you.”

These words were said at intervals ; but whilst they gave pain to the dying man in the utterance, they extracted a beaming of almost divine expression from his sinking eye ; and

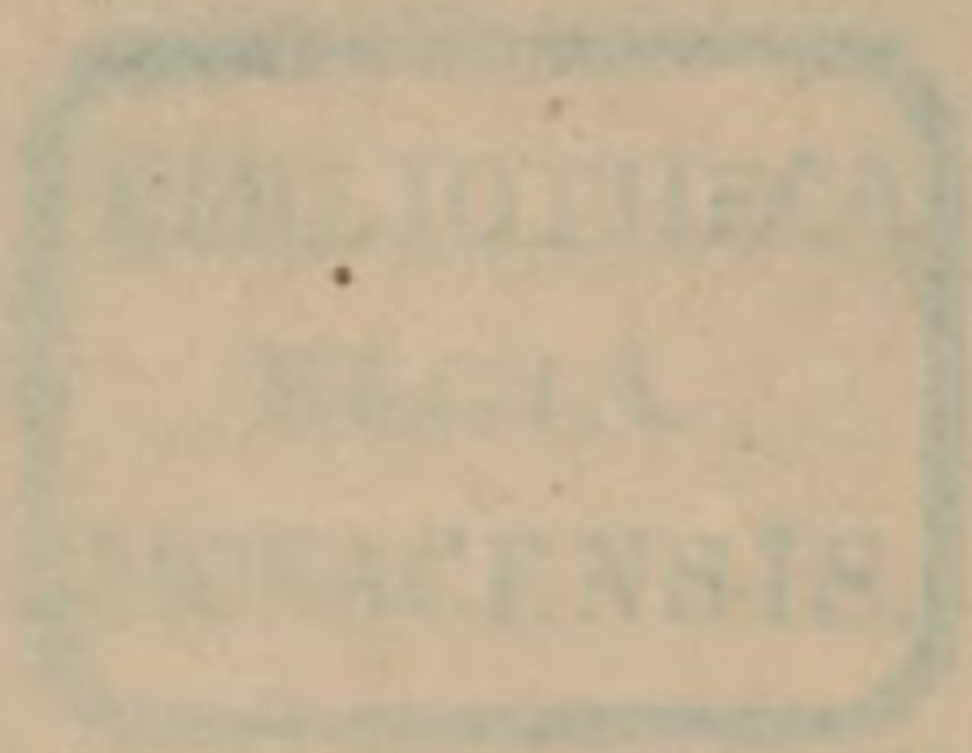
certainly, if the grave was ever swallowed up in victory, it was here. He died with Mary's hand clasped in one of his, and Edward's in the other; and holy was the sorrow which burst forth as soon as his soul had taken its flight. May the death of every one of my readers be like his!

THE END.

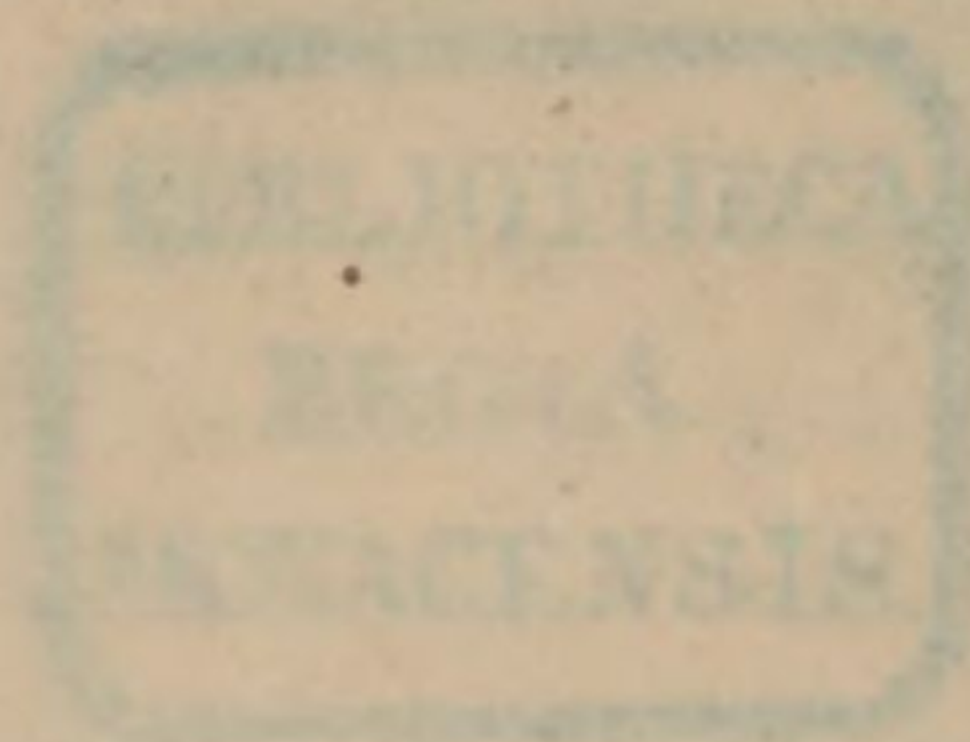


LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48106-1000
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



LIBRARY OF THE
KING OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
PRAGUE, 1801

Morier, James Justinian,

Abel Allnutt a novel

Bd.: 3

London (1837)

P.o.angl. 249 r-3

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10747860-0